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URGENT MESSAGE TO:

1. Directors of Pharmacy
2. Medical Directors NHS Boards

14 December 2021

Dear Healthcare Professional,

COVID THERAPEUTIC ALERT – WITHDRAWAL OF THE RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION FOR INHALED BUDESONIDE AS A TREATMENT OPTION FOR COVID-19

Please see attached CMO letter advising the inhaled budesonide should no longer be considered as a treatment for individuals with COVID-19 infection other than within the context of a clinical trial for onward transmission as detailed below:-

Could all Directors of Pharmacy please forward this alert to:-

- Community Pharmacists
- Hospital Pharmacists
- Primary Care Pharmacists

Please could Medical Directors arrange to forward this alert on to:-

- General Practitioners
- Accident & Emergency Departments
- Nurses
- Consultants in Communicable Diseases
- Directors of Public Health
- Relevant Clinics
- Chief Executives of NHS Board

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

IRENE FAZAKERLEY
Medicines Policy Team





COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert

CEM/CMO/2021/011(U)

14 December 2021

This alert supersedes the therapeutic alert CEM/CMO/2021/011 issued on 12 April 2021.

Withdrawal of the Recommendation for Consideration of Inhaled Budesonide as a Treatment Option for COVID-19

Recommendation

Inhaled budesonide should no longer be considered as a treatment for individuals with COVID-19 infection other than within the context of a clinical trial. People already using budesonide for conditions other than COVID-19 should continue treatment if they test positive for COVID-19.

Supporting Evidence

Final results from the [PRINCIPLE](#) and [STOIC](#) trials of inhaled budesonide as a treatment for mild to moderate COVID-19 infection have been published.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has updated its [COVID-19 Rapid Guideline](#) to recommend that inhaled budesonide is only used to treat COVID-19 as part of a clinical trial.

Action

Clinical teams within primary and secondary care, community pharmacies and dispensing practices are asked to note the revised recommendation that:

Inhaled budesonide should no longer be considered as a treatment for individuals with COVID-19 infection other than within the context of a clinical trial.

Prescribers may wish to refer to the NICE [COVID-19 Rapid Guideline](#) for further information.

Distribution

General Practice
NHS 111
Community Pharmacies

ICS /STP and Clinical Commissioning Group Pharmacy Leads
NHS Trusts (NHS boards in Scotland and Wales)
Regional Medical Directors
Regional Chief Pharmacists
Lead/Senior Pharmacists and Regional Procurement Pharmacy Leads
Trust/Hospital Medical Directors and Chief Pharmacists to circulate to medical,
pharmacy and nursing staff managing COVID-19 patients

Enquiries

England

Enquiries from general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to the local clinical commissioning group. Enquiries from NHS trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to the trust pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Chief Pharmacist and national teams if required. Further information can be requested from the dedicated email address: england.spoc-c19therapeutics@nhs.net.

Northern Ireland

Enquiries general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to your local HSCB office. Enquiries from hospitals in Northern Ireland should in the first instance be directed to your hospital pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service or Pharmaceutical Directorate at the Department of Health if required Further information can be obtained by contacting RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net

Scotland

Enquiries in Scotland should in the first instance be directed to the Health Board Director of Pharmacy who will escalate issues to either NHS National Procurement or the Scottish Government's Medicines Policy Team if required. Contact should be made using the following emails: nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot or medicines.policy@gov.scot

Wales

Enquiries in Wales should in the first instance be directed to the health board's Chief Pharmacist who will escalate issues to the Pharmacy and Prescribing Team at Welsh Government if required. Enquiries to the Welsh Government should be directed to: COVID-19.Pharmacy.Prescribing@gov.wales.