

To: All Community Pharmacists

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Dear Colleague

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO MINOR AILMENTS SERVICE

At the recent training events for the “Pharmacy First Service for sore throat, colds and flu-like illness” it was highlighted that the HSCB, in conjunction with Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI), is working towards implementation of a much wider Pharmacy First Service that will replace the current Minor Ailment Service (MAS).

However, in this interim period the value of the MAS continues to be recognised and for this reason the HSCB, in partnership with CPNI, have made a number of changes to the current MAS. The purpose of this letter is to advise you of these changes which will come into effect on 1st February 2019.

Addition of minor ailments conditions

The following minor ailments have been added to the service:

- Acne Vulgaris
- Haemorrhoids
- Scabies
- Verrucae

Treatment algorithms for these minor ailments can be accessed on the BSO website at <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2055.htm>

Removal of a minor ailment condition

Cold Sores will be removed from the list of minor ailments that may be treated via the MAS from 1st February 2019. This is in line with the NICE Clinical Knowledge Guidance Summary which does not recommend

prescribing of topical antiviral preparations, such as aciclovir or penciclovir, based on the lack of good quality evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs) that these agents are effective in reducing pain or time of healing compared with placebo or no treatment.
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/herpes-simplex-oral>

Updated treatment algorithms for existing minor ailments

1. Mouth Ulcers:

Products available for the treatment of mouth ulcers have been rationalised to include Hydrocortisone pellets only. From 1st February 2019, Chlorhexidine mouthwash cannot be supplied via the MAS.

2. Acute diarrhoea:

The treatment algorithm for this condition has been updated to reflect the risk of Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) in patients who are prescribed medicines that could increase the risk of AKI e.g. ACE inhibitors, ARBs, NSAIDs, Diuretics or Metformin. Patients at risk of AKI are particularly vulnerable at times of acute illness such as vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration. Pharmacists should carefully assess patients presenting with these symptoms. Further information available at <https://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk/>

3. Head lice:

The treatment algorithm has been updated to highlight the fire risk associated with Hedrin[®] 4% cutaneous solution. The SPC for Hedrin[®] warns that the solution is combustible when on the hair and in direct contact with an open flame or other source of ignition.

4. Oral thrush:

The MHRA issued a drug safety update in September 2017 reminding healthcare professionals of the potentially serious interaction between miconazole oral gel and warfarin. Miconazole oral gel enhances the anticoagulant effect of warfarin. Patients on warfarin, presenting in the pharmacy, for treatment for oral thrush should be referred to their GP.

Updated MAS resources including service specification, treatment algorithms and formulary are now available on BSO website at: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2055.htm>

Part 1(b) of the Northern Ireland Drug Tariff will be amended on 1st February 2019 in line with the revised formulary for MAS: http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/DT_PART_1b_1901.pdf

Further information and training on the management of minor ailments may be accessed at: <https://www.nicpld.org/>

The pharmacy's standard operating procedure for the provision of the MAS should be reviewed to reflect these changes.

If you have any queries about the changes to the MAS please contact your local HSCB Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely,



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