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## Change to first line 'triptan' for treatment of migraine

The first line treatment of a mild to moderate acute migraine attack is;

- aspirin
- paracetamol
- ibuprofen

along with metoclopramide. The combination of an analgesic and metoclopramide can be as effective as a triptan. Always remember to consider that the migraine is not drug-induced, e.g. codeine.

When symptoms of migraine are more severe a 'triptan' may be needed.

Up to now sumatriptan has been the formulary choice however with the recent huge price hikes of sumatriptan, **frovatriptan (Migard®) is now the most cost effective 'triptan'**. SIGN & NICE guidelines state that different triptans are equally effective so recommend using the least expensive triptan.

A switch to frovatriptan could save up to £150,000 a year.

**Frovatriptan 2.5mg tablets** - one tablet should be taken on onset however a tablet can be taken at a later stage and still work. If the migraine recurs after initial relief, a second dose may be taken, providing there is an interval of at least 2 hours between the doses.



## Social Media

**The team are making use of social media to advertise current campaigns and promote key messages.**

 Follow us on twitter @DGNHS and find us on the locality  facebook pages e.g. Wigtownshire Health and Social Care Team and Nithsdale Health & Social Care

Here are examples of on-going campaigns

## Drug costs

In NHS Dumfries and Galloway, we spend in excess of £30m on drugs in Primary Care each year. Drug price hikes are out with our control so we need to find and encourage other methods to save money. Such as;

- Cost effective medication changes e.g. change of triptan
- Encourage patients to buy simple painkillers and other readily available medicines over-the-counter. Most can be purchased relatively cheaply these days from pharmacies and supermarkets.

We can all help to play a small part in making the best use of our limited medicines fund.

## Stay warm, stay home

As we know, hospitals and GPs are extremely stretched. This campaign is about raising awareness of contacting the local pharmacy first before visiting A&E or your local GP practice. There are lots of people with coughs, colds and other common respiratory conditions at this time of year. Most of the time these symptoms, whilst unpleasant, will go away by themselves; in general cold symptoms may last up to 3 weeks. Please encourage people with these symptoms to stay at home, rest, drink plenty of fluids and take a simple painkiller like paracetamol. However if breathless or pregnant or have seen no improvement in 7 days a GP's advice should be sought.

## Pharmacy first

Patients should be encouraged to visit their *pharmacy first* for the treatment of minor ailments. It is important to remember that pharmacies can also provide the supply of emergency hormonal contraception, trimethoprim for UTI's if female and aged between 16 - 64 years of age and have symptoms of an uncomplicated urinary tract infection and for medicine supply issues. Boots High Street in Dumfries is open each Sunday (12-4pm) and four pharmacies in Wigtownshire (Newton Stewart and Stranraer) are open on a rotational basis – patients can check with their local pharmacy or facebook which pharmacy is open.

## Waste Campaign

Please ensure that patients are not over ordering medication especially if patients ordered extra over the festive period.

## Flu immunisation

There is still time to get your flu vaccination, if you haven't got it yet, please do so.

## Specific Drug Issues

### MHRA – Drug Alert: Buccolam 2.5mg, 5mg, 7.5mg and 10mg Oromucosal Solution Pre-filled Syringes

Shire® and MHRA have issued the following information and advice;

- There have been reports of a product quality defect relating to BUCCOLAM pre-filled plastic syringes
- In a very small number of cases, the translucent tip-cap has remained on the syringe tip when pulling the red cap off. The translucent cap should normally be removed with the red cap. This will prevent administration of Buccolam.
- If this occurs the advice is to manually remove the translucent cap.

Please pass this information to relevant patients and caregivers. Shire® are hoping to resolve this issue quickly.

### Pressure on the drugs budget

We're all trying to do what we can to contain the drug budget but it's very difficult when there is extra pressure of drug price increases. Olanzapine and quetiapine prices have increased hugely for unknown reasons. Please be aware of these additional pressures and encourage patients not to waste medicines or over order and purchase their own simple analgesia if able.

### Laxatives

In general constipation there is no need to prescribe both lactulose and Laxido®/CosmoCol® as they have the same mode of action.

### Teicoplanin for pacemaker insertion

Teicoplanin is now the antibiotic to be used for pacemaker insertion. This is a change from flucloxacillin.

### Raising awareness of online doctor services

Anecdotally, there have been reports of people accessing online doctor services and having medicines both prescribed and dispensed e.g. oral contraceptives and orlistat. This information may not always be shared with their own GP. Please be aware.



## Gluten Free Food List January 2018

The Gluten-Free Food list has been updated. This list is to be used for appropriate patients following a confirmed diagnosis of Coeliac Disease or Dermatitis Herpetiformis. People in Dumfries & Galloway are entitled to receive gluten free 'staples' on prescription to help them follow a gluten free diet.

To see the updated gluten free food list go to the prescribing matters website at the below link:

<http://www.dgprescribingmatters.co.uk/documents/Gluten%20free%20formulary%202018.pdf>

## Telehealth Facility – 'Florence'



NHS Dumfries and Galloway are piloting a new interactive text messaging service called Florence to help motivate patients adhere with shared healthcare management plans. It is a simple way to help patients help themselves by delivering prompts, advice and education via their mobile phone. No hi-tech smart phone is required as it works via SMS messages on any old phone!

Various Services across the region are using Florence to keep in touch with patients and this is just the beginning. In Wigtownshire it is hoped District Nurses will use it to help identify when patients need their dressings changed reducing home visits and the Pharmacy Team are utilising it to remind a patient that they need to take their evening dose of insulin. DGRI Out-patients are investigating how the Service can be used to monitor patients post-operatively and there is scope to up skill patients to better recognise and treat COPD exacerbations at an early stage.

One patient who uses Florence said

"Things are so much better since I joined in January. If there are signs an infection could be on the way, Flo is the key to take some antibiotics. I haven't had a chest infection all year."

This is an exciting development in how technology can help improve patient care across NHS D&G. If you would like any further information on Florence please do not hesitate to contact Leanne Drummond on [Leannedrummond@nhs.net](mailto:Leannedrummond@nhs.net).

## BNF Interaction Tables

In the current BNF 74 there are tables included in the interactions section which are worth drawing attention to (p1264). These contain information on drugs which commonly cause various pharmacodynamic effects such as nephrotoxicity and hyponatraemia. Of particular note are the lists of drugs that reduce serum potassium and those that prolong the QT interval, which together can increase the risk of torsade de pointes. There are several commonly used drugs present on both lists so it is worthwhile familiarising yourself with these tables.

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