

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Medicines Optimisation Briefing

Re-use of paracetamol no longer required for individual residents in care homes

****Only for use during the COVID-19 pandemic ****

Information for Healthcare Professional advising care homes including:

- GP practice team (GP, practice nurse, practice pharmacist)
- Community nurses
- Community pharmacists

Given the current situation and difficulties in some cases in obtaining paracetamol, it is crucial that we do not dispose of paracetamol unnecessarily in line with the waste reduction guidance for care homes. Care home staff have been asked to minimise medicine waste, in particular paracetamol, by completing supplies of regular and PRN medicine rather than placing unused medicines at the end of the medicine monthly cycle, for disposal.

In addition to this, during this exceptional time of the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, the CCG supports the re-use of paracetamol in care homes in the locality for residents for whom it was not initially prescribed. Care homes following this guidance must follow strict protocols. They may use these reserved stocks either under current homely remedy agreements or following the advice of a healthcare professional.

Advice:

- Continue to prescribe paracetamol on current repeat prescriptions as requested by the care home for those individuals where it continues to be appropriate.
- If after clinical assessment paracetamol is considered appropriate for a short course, provide care home staff with advice to administer to the patient. Advice should preferably be in writing (email or professional advice record in care home or verbally - you may be asked to repeat to a second member of staff for confirmation)

Note: many care homes now have access to nhs.net mail which enable email information to be sent securely – please check with the home regarding their email address/ status
Other homes may have a standardised “Healthcare professional advice sheet” to record and evidence advice

Information to provide to care home:

- Dose (NB consider if lower dose needed if <50kg)
- Frequency
- Indication
- When to stop treatment depending upon symptoms

This guidance will cease to be applicable at the end of the current pandemic situation.

This briefing has been developed by NECS MO team, it contains information which is accurate to the best of our knowledge but as the Covid-19 situation is very fluid advice may change. For full prescribing information for a medicine please refer to the SPC at <https://www.medicines.org.uk>

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Use of unwanted paracetamol in care homes		
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		Page 1 of 1