

Lincolnshire Prescribing and Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin

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PRESCRIBING GUIDANCE FOR HAY FEVER: SPRING / SUMMER 2017

- Prescribers are encouraged to utilize either generic cetirizine 10mg tablets or generic loratadine 10mg tablets as their first line non-sedating antihistamines of choice. Designation: GREEN. Wherever possible, patients should be encouraged to purchase their own supply from the supermarket or community pharmacy of their choice. Where possible, patients who have historically taken desloratadine, levocetirizine or mizolastine should be reviewed and changed to either generic loratadine or cetirizine for the Spring/Summer 2017 hay fever season. Generic fexofenadine 120mg tablets are recommended third line in those insufficiently responsive to or intolerant of either cetirizine or loratadine; fexofenadine is only available on prescription.
- For patients requiring treatment for perennial or seasonal allergic rhinitis, always consider self-care as a first line option. *Beconase Hayfever* nasal sprays are available to buy from supermarkets (100 sprays) and community pharmacies (180 sprays). Where prescribing is unavoidable, beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (generic/*Beconase*) should be prescribed first line.
- Budesonide aqueous nasal spray 64mcg (120 dose) is a suitable alternative second-line choice after beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray. Wherever possible, patients who have historically used more expensive intranasal steroid formulations should be reviewed and changed to budesonide aqueous nasal spray 64mcg (120 dose), beclometasone aqueous nasal spray or *Beconase* 50mcg (200dose). Where an intermediate cost, third line intranasal steroid is indicated, mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray is preferred. Fluticasone containing products should be restricted to a third line role. *Flixonase* nasal spray is prohibitively expensive and *Avamys* nasal spray should always be preferred.
- Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops offer cost-effective, safe relief of ocular symptoms for the majority of hay fever sufferers requiring eye drops. *Otrivine-Antistin* eye drops present a suitable low cost alternative for those who require occasional ocular symptom relief. Both products are available to buy and should be considered for self-care.

Introduction

As part of the Lincolnshire Self-Care Programme, a number of treatments for hay fever have been identified as available from supermarkets, community pharmacies and other retailers and as suitable for many patients to buy for themselves. It is the purpose of this special edition of the *PACE Bulletin* to identify opportunities for self-care and to encourage prescribers to signpost hay fever sufferers towards purchasing their own supplies of these treatments wherever possible.

Non-sedating antihistamines

Low cost generic formulations of cetirizine 10mg tablets and loratadine 10mg tablets are widely available to buy from supermarkets with packs of 30 tablets retailing at around £1 per pack over the Spring and Summer months. Higher cost branded formulations of these medicines such as *Clarityn* and *Zirtek* are also available in smaller, more expensive packs;

in order to minimize the cost of self-care, patients should be advised to seek out the lower cost generics. Taking into account the cost of the consultation time and dispensing, it is considerably more expensive for the NHS to provide low cost generic antihistamines on prescription than for the patient to purchase their own.

An updated cost comparison of non-sedating antihistamines reveals the following:

Cost Comparison: Non-sedating antihistamines (Drug Tariff (March 2017))

	Cost for 30 days	Formulary Status
Cetirizine 10mg tablets	76p	GREEN First Line
Loratadine 10mg tablets	84p	GREEN First Line
Fexofenadine 120mg tablets	£1.69	GREEN Second Line
Fexofenadine 180mg tablets (not licensed for hay-fever)	£2.50	GREEN Second Line
Levocetirizine (<i>Xyza</i>) 5mg tablets (UCB Pharma Ltd)	£4.36	RED-RED
Mizolastine (<i>Mizollen</i>) 10mg MR tablets (Sanofi)	£6.92	RED-RED
Desloratadine (<i>Neoclarityn</i>) 5mg tablets (Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd)	£1.23	RED-RED
	Cost per pack	
Cetirizine 5mg/5ml soln (200ml)	£1.58	GREEN
Loratadine 5mg/5ml syrup (100ml)	£1.80	GREEN
Levocetirizine (<i>Xyza</i>) 500 mcg/ml solution (200ml) (UCB Pharma Ltd)	£6.00	RED-RED
Desloratadine (<i>Neoclarityn</i>) 2.5mg/5ml oral soln (150ml) (Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd)	£10.15	RED-RED

(Preferred agents are highlighted in bold)

PACEF Recommendation

Prescribers are encouraged to utilize either generic cetirizine 10mg tablets or generic loratadine 10mg tablets as their first line non-sedating antihistamines of choice.

Designation: GREEN. Wherever possible, patients should be encouraged to purchase their own supply from the supermarket or community pharmacy of their choice.

Where possible, patients who have historically taken desloratadine, levocetirizine or mizolastine should be reviewed and changed to either generic loratadine or cetirizine for the Spring/Summer 2017 hay fever season. Generic fexofenadine 120mg tablets are recommended third line in those insufficiently responsive to or intolerant of either cetirizine or loratadine; fexofenadine is only available on prescription.

Intranasal corticosteroids in perennial and seasonal allergic rhinitis

PACEF have reviewed existing guidance on the prescribing of intranasal corticosteroids. An updated cost comparison including a new section on availability over-the-counter appears below. Updated guidance is as follows:

Self-care

- Patients requiring either a systemic antihistamine or a nasal corticosteroid or both to control the symptoms of perennial or seasonal allergic rhinitis should be considered for self-care. *Beconase Hayfever Relief for Adults* nasal spray is on the General Sales List and is available from supermarkets and other retailers for considerably less than the prescription charge.

First Line

- Where prescribing is considered necessary, beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (generic/*Beconase*) is the lowest cost intranasal corticosteroid and remains the first line product of choice.

Second Line

- Budesonide 64 microgram nasal spray (generic or *Rhinocort Aqua*) is also comparatively low cost and represents an appropriate second line choice that would still be low cost in combination with an oral antihistamine. Alternatively, generic mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray could be considered. Neither of these products are available over-the-counter to buy.

Third Line

- Fluticasone containing nasal sprays are significantly more expensive than beclometasone or budesonide containing products and should only be considered for prescribing third line. Fluticasone furoate 27.5 microgram nasal spray (*Avamys*) is the fluticasone containing nasal spray of choice and is significantly lower in cost than more expensive products such as mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (*Nasonex*), triamcinolone acetonide 55 microgram nasal spray (*Nasacort*) and fluticasone propionate 50 microgram nasal spray (*Flixonase*). None of these products are available over-the-counter to buy.
- Fluticasone propionate 50 microgram nasal spray (*Flixonase*) is prohibitively expensive in comparison to alternative intranasal corticosteroid preparations and should no longer be initiated in new patients. Despite PACEF advice *Flixonase* continues to be prescribed, in some CCGs more widely than *Avamys*. Prescribers are reminded that for new patients, fluticasone propionate 50 microgram nasal spray (*Flixonase*) is designated RED-RED.
- Combination therapy of a low cost corticosteroid nasal spray with a low cost generic antihistamine, such as cetirizine 10mg or loratadine 10mg, is significantly lower in cost than fluticasone propionate/ azelastine hydrochloride 50 microgram/ 137 microgram nasal spray (*Dymista*) which remains RED-RED.

Drug	Daily dose	NHS reimbursement price (£) (doses)	Availability to buy	Formulary status
Beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (generic)	2 sprays into each nostril twice daily	£1.93 (200)	<p><i>Beconase Hayfever Relief for Adults</i> nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available to buy (GSL) 100 sprays £6.99.</p> <p><i>Beconase Hayfever</i> aqueous nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available over-the-counter from pharmacies (P). RRP 180 sprays £9.99.</p> <p><i>Nasobec Hayfever and Pollenase</i></p>	GREEN First Line

			Hayfever are also available over-the-counter (P).	
Beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (<i>Beconase</i>) (GaxoSmithKline)	2 sprays into each nostril twice daily	£2.63 (200)	<i>Beconase Hayfever Relief for Adults</i> nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available to buy (GSL) 100 sprays £6.99. <i>Beconase Hayfever</i> aqueous nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available over-the-counter from pharmacies (P). RRP 180 sprays £9.99. <i>Nasobec Hayfever</i> and <i>Pollenase Hayfever</i> are also available over-the-counter (P).	GREEN First Line
Beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (<i>Nasobec</i>) (Teva UK)	2 sprays into each nostril twice daily	£3.06 (200)	<i>Beconase Hayfever Relief for Adults</i> nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available to buy (GSL) 100 sprays £6.99. <i>Beconase Hayfever</i> aqueous nasal spray 50mcg/dose is available over-the-counter from pharmacies (P). RRP 180 sprays £9.99. <i>Nasobec Hayfever</i> and <i>Pollenase Hayfever</i> are also available over-the-counter (P).	RED-RED
Budesonide 64 microgram nasal spray (generic)	1 spray into each nostril twice daily	£4.77 (120)	Not available.	GREEN Second Line
Budesonide 64 microgram nasal spray (<i>Rhinocort Aqua</i>) (AstraZeneca)	1 spray into each nostril twice daily	£3.49 (120)	Not available.	GREEN Second Line
Fluticasone furoate 27.5 microgram nasal spray (<i>Avamys</i>) (GlaxoSmithKline)	2 sprays into each nostril once daily reducing to 1 spray each nostril daily.	£6.44 (120)	Not available.	GREEN Third Line
Fluticasone propionate 50 microgram nasal spray (<i>Flixonase</i>) (GlaxoSmithKline)	1 spray into each nostril twice daily	£11.01 (150)	Fluticasone propionate 50 microgram per dose: Boots Pharmacy	RED-RED

			Hayfever and Allergy Pirinase Hayfever 0.05% nasal spray (RRP: 60 sprays (P) £7.89, 60 sprays (GSL) £7.89)	
Azelastine hydrochloride 0.1% nasal spray (<i>Rhinolast</i>) (Meda)	1 spray into each nostril twice daily	£10.50 (150)	Not available.	RED-RED
Fluticasone propionate/azelastine hydrochloride 50 microgram/ 137 microgram nasal spray (<i>Dymista</i>) (Meda)	1 spray into each nostril twice daily	£ 14.80 (120)	Not available.	RED-RED
Mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (generic)	2 sprays into each nostril once daily	£2.31 (140)	Not available.	GREEN Third Line
Mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (<i>Nasonex</i>) (MSD)	2 sprays into each nostril once daily	£7.68 (140)	Not available.	RED-RED
Triamcinolone acetonide 55 microgram nasal spray (<i>Nasacort</i>) (Sanofi)	2 sprays per nostril once daily	£7.39 (120)	Triamcinolone acetonide 55mcg per dose: <i>Nasacort Allergy Nasal Spray</i> (RRP: 30 dose spray pack (P) £5.17)	GREEN Third Line

PACEF Recommendations

For patients requiring treatment for perennial or seasonal allergic rhinitis, always consider self-care as a first line option. *Beconase Hayfever* nasal sprays are available to buy from supermarkets (100 sprays) and community pharmacies (180 sprays). Where prescribing is unavoidable, beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray (generic/*Beconase*) should be prescribed first line. Budesonide aqueous nasal spray 64mcg (120 dose) is a suitable alternative second-line choice after beclometasone 50 microgram nasal spray. Wherever possible, patients who have historically used more expensive intranasal steroid formulations should be reviewed and changed to budesonide aqueous nasal spray 64mcg (120 dose), beclometasone aqueous nasal spray or *Beconase* 50mcg (200dose). Where an intermediate cost, third line intranasal steroid is indicated, mometasone 50 microgram nasal spray is preferred. Fluticasone containing products should be restricted to a third line role. *Flixonase* nasal spray is prohibitively expensive and *Avamys* nasal spray should always be preferred.

Anti-allergy Eye Drops

Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops are available from community pharmacies and supermarkets in a variety of pack sizes. Branded products are likely to be the most expensive, with generic or 'own-label' versions the least expensive. The recommended retail prices of the leading brands are tabulated below:

	<u>Pack Size (Legal Classification)</u> <u>Recommended Retail Price</u>
<i>Murine Hayfever Relief</i> 2% eye drops	10ml (GSL) £4.99
<i>Opticrom Allergy</i> 2% eye drops	5ml (P) £4.70; 10ml (P) £5.74
<i>Opticrom Hayfever</i> 2% eye drops	5ml (P) £4.70; 10ml (P) £5.74
<i>Optrex Allergy</i> 2% eye drops	10ml (P) 5.99
<i>Optrex Hayfever Relief</i> 2% eye	10ml (GSL) £5.99

drops	
Xylometazoline hydrochloride 0.05%/ antazoline sulfate 0.5% eye drops (<i>Otrivine-Antistin</i>).	10ml (P) £5.48

Where prescribed therapy continues to be necessary, generic sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops (13.5ml) are preferred first line; designation GREEN. Prescribing sodium cromoglicate in smaller unit quantities than 13.5ml (i.e. 5ml or 10ml) increases the unit cost. Xylometazoline HCl 0.05%/ antazoline sulphate 0.5% (*Otrivine-Antistin*) and Iodoxamide 0.1% eye drops (*Alomide*) are also approved for use through the Lincolnshire Joint Formulary; designated GREEN second line. Eye drops are generally unpopular, particularly if prescribed for regular daily use; most individuals would prefer alternative treatments.

Cost Comparison: Anti-allergy eye drops (Drug Tariff (March 2017))

	NHS Reimbursement Cost (Pack Size)	Formulary Status
Sodium cromoglicate eye drops 2% (generic)	£1.72 (13.5ml)	GREEN First Line
Sodium cromoglicate eye drops 2% (<i>Opticrom</i>) (Sanofi)	£1.72 (13.5ml)	RED-RED
Sodium cromoglicate eye drops 2% (<i>Vividrin Drops</i>) (Bausch & Lomb)	£8.70 (13.5ml)	RED-RED
Xylometazoline HCl 0.05%/ antazoline sulphate 0.5% (<i>Otrivine-Antistin</i>) (Thea)	£3.35 (10ml)	GREEN Second Line
Azelastine 0.05% eye drops (<i>Optilast</i>) (Meda)	£6.40 (8ml)	RED-RED
Emedastine 0.5mg/ml eye drops (<i>Emadine</i>) (Alcon)	£7.31 (5ml)	RED-RED
Epinastine 0.5mg/ml eye drops (<i>Relestat</i>) (Allergan)	£9.90 (5ml)	RED-RED
Ketotifen 0.25mg/ml eye drops (<i>Zaditen</i>) (Thea)	£7.80 (5ml)	RED-RED
Lodoxamide 0.1% eye drops (<i>Alomide</i>) (Alcon)	£5.21 (10ml)	GREEN Second Line
Nedocromil 2% eye drops (<i>Rapitol</i>) (Sanofi)	£2.86 (5ml)	RED-RED
Olopatadine 0.1% eye drops (<i>Opatanol</i>) (Alcon)	£4.68 (5ml)	RED-RED

(Preferred agents are highlighted in bold)

PACEF Recommendation:

Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops offer cost-effective, safe relief of ocular symptoms for the majority of hay fever sufferers requiring eye drops. *Otrivine-Antistin* eye drops present a suitable low cost alternative for those who require occasional ocular symptom relief. Both products are available to buy and should be considered for self-care.

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