

# Medicines Optimisation **intervention brief**

## Medicines Optimisation Incentive Scheme 2019/20 Cost saving intervention

<b>TITLE?</b>
CS2.3.6 Deprescribe Vitamin B Compound and Vitamin B Compound Strong Tablets
<b>WHAT?</b>
Vitamin B compound and vitamin B compound strong tablets should no longer be prescribed in primary care.
<b>WHY?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is insufficient high quality evidence to demonstrate the clinical effectiveness of vitamins and minerals.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• The only exception is a medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition or have undergone surgery that results in malabsorption.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Oral thiamine is the only oral preparation recommended by NICE<sup>1</sup> for patients who have a chronic alcohol problem and whose diet may be deficient.</li> <li>• NICE recommends offering prophylactic thiamine to people at high risk of developing, or with suspected, Wernicke's encephalopathy.</li> <li>• The Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC) advice is that Vitamin B compound or compound strong tablets should not be prescribed for prevention of Wernicke's encephalopathy in alcoholism.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• RMOC advice for refeeding syndrome is that vitamin B compound strong tablets may be prescribed, but only on a short-term basis (10 days).<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• GPs should no longer be asked to continue prescribing vitamin B compound strong in primary care for prevention of Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome as standard.</li> <li>• The current spend on vitamin B compound and vitamin B compound strong in west Hampshire is more than £160,000 per annum.</li> <li>• Current policy at local acute trusts is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>University Hospital Southampton</b></li> <li>Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome (WKS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vitamin B compound strong for one month only and full supply to come from the hospital.</li> <li>○ Thiamine to be prescribed at a dose of 100mg two or three times a day. This should be continued for 6 months and then stopped if the patient is no longer consuming alcohol, but continued if the patient is still drinking. GPs should be asked to review their patients' drinking status.</li> <li>○ Some patients may require Sanatogen A-Z tablets but this will be for a maximum of</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>



one month unless there is particular concern about nutrition or if there is high risk; e.g. decompensated liver patients on the transplant list.

#### Re-feeding syndrome

- A combination of intravenous Pabrinex plus oral thiamine, vitamin B compound strong and a complete multivitamin/trace element supplement, such as Sanatogen A-Z or Forceval soluble are prescribed.
- Treatment should be stopped after a total of ten days and the full supply will be provided by the hospital.

#### **Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals and Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust**

- The decision has been made to stop all vitamin B Compound strong prescribing in alcohol withdrawal patients as per NICE. Thiamine 100mg three times a day alone is the recommended dose after a course of Pabrinex.
- Vitamin B compound strong will be reclassified as RED for refeeding syndrome only.
- Additional short term use of vitamin B supplements may be requested on an individual basis for certain high risk patients.

#### **Salisbury District Hospital**

- Vitamin B compound and vitamin B compound strong are no longer to be prescribed as part of alcohol detoxification.
- Vitamin B compound strong will still be used short term (5 days) as part of the refeeding protocol.
- If there is any other reason for prescribing this should be made explicit in the discharge or out-patient letter.

#### **WHO?**

- All patients who are currently prescribed vitamin B compound or vitamin B compound strong on repeat prescription.

#### **TIPS?**

Use the standard search to identify patients

#### **HOW?**

- Search for all patients who have a vitamin B compound or vitamin B compound strong preparation as a repeat.
- Agree with the practice that vitamin B compound strong tablets can be removed from the repeat by completing the STOPP agreement.
- Remove item from repeat prescription list for each patient and add an explanatory note to the patient consultation record.
- Where vitamin B compound or vitamin B compound strong is being used for prevention of WKS, check whether treatment with thiamine is required. Refer to the GP if thiamine needs to be added or the dose changed. Recommended dosing is:
  - 100mg two or three times a day for an initial six months.
  - Thiamine should be continued at this dose if the patient continues to consume alcohol or if they are at risk of malnourishment.
  - Following successful alcohol withdrawal, thiamine should be continued for a further six weeks.
  - Thiamine should be restarted if the patient starts drinking again.
- Patient communication must be agreed with the practice. A sample patient letter is available.

*Quality services, better health*



Approved October 2019  
Updated January 2020

## SO WHAT?

- Effective prescribing promoted by implementing NHS England and local guidance.
- Savings realised.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Clinical Guideline 100. Alcohol-use disorders: Diagnosis and clinical management of alcohol-related physical complications. June 2010. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg100>
2. The prescribing of vitamins and minerals including vitamin B preparations (DROP-List) <https://www.prescripp.info/media/1735/b107-multivitamins-21.pdf>
3. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: guidance for CCGs. NHS England. March 2018 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>
4. UHS policy for treatment of Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome (WKS). March 2019
5. Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospital D&T minutes, July 2019
6. Salisbury District Hospital D&T minutes, August 2019 and formulary.
7. Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC) Position Statement. Oral vitamin B supplementation in alcoholism. November 2019 <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/rmoc-position-statement-oral-vitamin-b-supplementation>

