



New Northamptonshire Adult Asthma Guidelines

Expenditure on inhalers in Northamptonshire was £10.2 million in the last year; approximately 10% of the primary care prescribing budget. The Northamptonshire Prescribing Management Group is keen to promote optimal prescribing in this clinical area and there are two respiratory markers within this year's Prescribing Achievement Framework.

However ensuring optimal prescribing can be difficult for prescribers due to the array of drugs and devices that are available. Furthermore the pricing structure for many of the products available further complicates the situation i.e. a particular brand may be relatively cheap at a low dose, but expensive at a higher doses.

In order to support practices in working within this area the Northamptonshire Adult Asthma Guidelines have been updated and these can be found on Pathfinder at

<http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/media/2783236/adult-asthma-inhaler-guidelines-23.4.14.pdf>

The new guidelines include the following inhalers:

- **Fostair** - this is the preferred product for low to moderate dose ICS/LABA combinations. Fostair 100/6 inhaler is product of choice because it contains beclometasone (100 micrograms of beclometasone dipropionate and 6 micrograms of formoterol fumarate) which is likely to have a better safety profile and is considerably cheaper than fluticasone options.

Note - Fostair 100/6 contains fine-particle beclometasone and is consequently equivalent to 200-250microgram standard BDP.

Fostair 100/6 inhaler could be considered for any new asthma patients requiring a low or moderate dose ICS / LABA combination inhaler. Adult asthma patients currently prescribed a low or moderate dose ICS/LABA combination inhaler e.g, Seretide could be reviewed / assessed and then if deemed clinically appropriate, be switched to Fostair 100/6 inhaler.

- **Flutiform** – this inhaler is a recently launched combination ICS/LABA metered dose inhaler (MDI), licensed for use in asthma, which contains fluticasone propionate and formoterol fumarate. Flutiform offers a cost effective choice of product for prescribers preferring to use fluticasone as an ICS and wanting a product range that is cost-effective at low, moderate and high dose. (Fostair 100/6 inhaler does not offer a high dose treatment option). NICE has produced a new medicines evidence summary on Flutiform inhaler which states that in studies Flutiform was found to be non-inferior to comparable doses of fluticasone plus formoterol and non-inferior to a fluticasone/salmeterol combination inhaler in terms of effect on lung function.

Flutiform inhalers could be considered for new asthma patients over 12 years old requiring ICS/LABA combination inhalers where fluticasone is the preferred steroid and the clinician would like the range of low, medium and high dose combination products. High dose Flutiform is only licensed in adults over 18 years of age. Adults and children over 12 years old currently prescribed more costly ICS/LABA combination inhalers could be reviewed/assessed and, if deemed clinically appropriate, be switched to Flutiform inhaler at the appropriate dose.

- **MART (Fostair 100/6) and SMART (Symbicort)** – using these ICS/LABA combination inhalers for both maintenance and reliever should be considered for patients with troublesome or on-going exacerbations.
- **QVAR Easibreathe** – this is the breath-actuated MDI of choice at step 2

It is recognised that switching from one inhaler device to another is not a straight forward change and is more involved compared to other therapeutic switches. Therefore it is recommended that any changes should ideally be carried out in a nurse clinic. Inhaler technique, manual dexterity and patient preference must be assessed before switching to ensure concordance with therapy.

Guidelines with accompanying flow-charts have been produced to facilitate switching products when “stepping down” patient's inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) dose.

These can be found on Pathfinder at

<http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/media/2783239/nhsn-stepping-down-asthma-treatment-final.pdf>

This edition is also available on PathfinderRF
<http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene>

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