



CAS Alert

Influenza Season 2017/18: Use of Antiviral Medicines 9 May 2018

Alert reference number: **CEM/CMO/2018/003**

The most recent surveillance data from Public Health England (PHE) indicates that circulation of influenza in the community has returned to baseline levels.

GPs and other prescribers working in primary care should no longer prescribe antiviral medicines, for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza on an FP10 prescription form. Community pharmacists should no longer supply antiviral medicines in primary care, on presentation of an FP10 prescription form. This is in accordance with NICE guidance and Schedule 2 to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of drugs etc) Regulations 2004), commonly known as the Grey List or Selected List Scheme (SLS).

This advice stands until we write again to re-commence prescribing and supply of antiviral medicines in primary care. This does not impact on prescribing of antiviral medicines in hospitals. The arrangements for prescribing antivirals for localised community outbreaks of influenza in care homes, during the out of season period are set out below.

NHS England wrote to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in June 2017 to clarify arrangements for prescribing antiviral medicines when there are localised community outbreaks of influenza which may affect care homes during the out of season period, in line with NICE Technology Appraisals (TA158 and 168). This letter, asked CCGs to commission appropriate primary care clinicians to respond to such outbreaks by assessing exposed persons for treatment or prophylaxis and completing a patient specific direction for this purpose. This response may be required both inside and outside normal working hours.

Professor Dame Sally C Davies
Chief Medical Officer

Dr Keith Ridge
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Actions

Who: Prescribers and
Community Pharmacies

When: As soon as possible



Prescribers working in primary care and community pharmacists should no longer prescribe or supply antiviral medicines for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza on an FP10 prescription form.



The arrangements for prescribing antiviral medicines out of the flu season can be found at this [link](#)



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Further information

NICE guidance on the use of antiviral medicines can be accessed at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA168> for treatment, and <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA158> for prophylaxis.

Reports from PHE on influenza activity can be found on the GOV.UK website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/weekly-national-flu-reports>

Communication:

NHS England Area Teams have been asked to cascade this alert to: GPs, community pharmacists, hospital pharmacists, nurses and A&E for action.

Clinical Commissioning Groups are asked to note actions to facilitate the NHS response to out-of-season care home outbreaks. Additional guidance can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/localised-community-outbreaks-influenza-out-of-season-template-procedure.docx>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/primary-care/primary-care-comm/resource-primary/influenza-out-of-season-faqs/>

The alert has also been sent to:

NHS Trusts (England) - Chief Executive

NHS Trusts (England) Medical Director

NHS Foundation Trusts (England) - Chief Executive

NHS Foundation Trusts (England) Medical Director

CMO Urgent Messages – Recipients on public health link

CMO Urgent Messages – Non-NHS Recipients on public health link

Territorial CMO's in Ireland, Scotland and Wales

Clinical Commissioning Groups

NHS England, Public Health England and NHS Improvement will assist with cascading information to appropriate professional groups