



Tablet Press

The prescribing newsletter for GPs, nurses and pharmacists in
Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust



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- **Prices of hypnotics – temazepam and zopiclone**

The current prices of temazepam and zopiclone are as follows –

Zopiclone 3.75 mg x 28	£1.57
Zopiclone 7.5mg x 28	£1.48
Temazepam 10mg x 28	£4.48
Temazepam 20mg x 28	£1.60

For many years temazepam was considerably cheaper than zopiclone; this is no longer the case.

The NICE TA 77 advises, "When, after due consideration of the use of non-pharmacological measures, hypnotic drug therapy is considered appropriate for the management of severe insomnia interfering with normal daily life, it is recommended that hypnotics should be prescribed for short periods of time only, in strict accordance with their licensed indications.

It is recommended that, because of the lack of compelling evidence to distinguish between zaleplon, zolpidem, zopiclone or the shorteracting benzodiazepine hypnotics, the drug with the lowest purchase cost (taking into account daily required dose and product price per dose) should be prescribed".

- **Discontinuation of Beclazone Easi-breathe Inhalers**

Beclazone Easi-breathe inhalers will be discontinued from 30th September 2009.

In February 2008 we issued the following advice regarding breath-actuated inhalers – this still applies.

The Clenil range does not include a breath-actuated inhaler so, those patients who cannot co-ordinate a Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI), will need an alternative approach.

- *The PCT first-line choice would be a Clenil MDI with a spacer (Volumatic or Aerochamber). Given that beclometasone is administered twice daily, this should not unduly inconvenience patients and provides much improved lung deposition and reduces local side-effects, such as sore throat and oral thrush.*
- *The PCT second-line choice, where the switch is to be done by letter, is the Asmabec Clickhaler (Dry Powder for Inhalation). These come in the full dose range (50mcg, 100mcg and 250mcg) and are the least expensive dry powder inhalers (although still considerably more expensive than a Clenil Inhaler + spacer).*
- *An alternative second-line choice is the Qvar Easi Breathe but this is only suitable if patients are to be called in for face-to-face review as Qvar is not dose-equivalent with the CFC-containing beclometasone inhalers. Qvar Easi Breathe is slightly less expensive than Asmabec Clickhalers (dose for dose).*

- **Reporting adverse reactions to anti-viral drugs**

Given that large numbers of people are now being issued with anti-viral drugs, mainly oseltamivir, healthcare professionals are advised to report ADRs to the MHRA, where possible.

This can be done online via the following link

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Swinefluinformation/index.htm>

- **Swine Flu**

In an effort to centralise all enquiries and work around Swine Flu, NHS Northamptonshire has set up an Information Management Cell with its own e-mail address FCHincidentroom@northants.nhs.uk and contact phone number (01604 651515).

- **Leflunomide 20mg supply problem**

Several pharmacies have indicated that there is a supply problem with Leflunomide 20mg tablets. This has the potential to be a costly issue as the 20mg tablets are the same price as the 10mg tablets. The manufacturers Sanofi-Aventis have informed us that there are no specific supply problems at present but this issue may have been caused by suppliers having a quota. They advised that if a community pharmacy is unable obtain supplies they should be contact Sanofi-Aventis customer services on 0800 854 430).

This edition is also available on HNN (Health Network Northants)

<http://www.northants.nhs.uk/Display/Dynamic.jsp?topid=14070&lhsid=514&oid=2854¤tid=2854>

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Contact No 01536 480446