

## [#HelpYourNHS](#) Campaign launched Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

In line with NHS England recommendations, NHS Dorset has asked GP teams to stop prescribing medicines and treatments for 35 minor conditions. This allows GP practices to focus on caring for people who have more complex needs. These changes aim to use our local NHS resources more effectively and make the NHS sustainable in the long-term.

Read more about the #HelpYourNHS campaign on the [NHS Dorset website](#) (including the list of 35 minor conditions included). There is a set of downloadable resources available to support the campaign, including posters, flyers, leaflets, graphics, and information for digital screens – all available at the link above.

## Shortage of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT)

On 24th May 2024, the DSHC issued a [national patient safety alert](#) on the shortage of PERT, specifically:

- Creon® 10,000 and 25,000 capsules are in limited supply until 2026.
- Nutrizym® 22 capsules are out of stock until mid-August 2024.
- Pancrex V® capsules and powder remain available but are unable to support an increase in demand.

GP practices should identify patients potentially affected by the shortages of the affected products, and follow the guidance in the [patient safety alert](#), the [national position statement](#), and [from SPS](#). Searches are available at Dorset SystmOne GPs > Medicines optimisation > Alerts.

## Other drug shortages / supply issues

- Flamazine® 1% cream 20g, 50g, 250g and 500g packs are out of stock until early August 2024. Alternative products for the treatment of burns and wound care remain available and can support increased demand. Refer to the [SPS medicines supply tool](#) for information about suitable alternative products (free login needed).
- All strengths of Elvanse® capsules are now available and an improved level of supply will continue across the majority of Elvanse® and Elvanse Adult® presentations. There will however be intermittent supply issues with Elvanse® 40mg, Elvanse® Adult 40mg and Elvanse® 60mg capsules until August 2024. Refer to the [SPS medicines supply tool](#) for more information.
- Tegretol® (carbamazepine) 100mg/5ml liquid is [out of stock](#). Generic carbamazepine 100mg/5ml oral suspension sugar-free remains available but is unable to support an increase in demand. Unlicensed supplies can be sourced, lead times vary.

## Configuring GP prescribers SystmOne

We are aware there are some GP prescribers in primary care that are working in multiple GP practices but using the same prescriber code in all the practices they are working in.

Please note that GP prescriber codes are **not transferrable** between GP practices (unlike NMP codes). Therefore, if a GP is working in more than one GP practice, a 'spurious code' must be used as a prescriber code in 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent practices.

Information about which codes to use in which practices will be issued directly to the individual prescriber from PCSE, once their PCSE account is updated to reflect current roles of employment.

To check where you are currently linked to as a prescriber and which code to use, please refer to the full list, published monthly by the NHS BSA at: <https://opendata.nhsbsa.net/dataset/prescriber-details>.

If the entry or entries on this list do not reflect your current role(s) then for GPs please update your PCSE account, and for NMPs, please email the team at [medicine.question@nshdorset.nhs.uk](mailto:medicine.question@nshdorset.nhs.uk).

## Methotrexate injectable products

It has been locally agreed that where a patient is **newly initiated** on an injectable methotrexate product, secondary care teams will initiate treatment with Metoject®. Existing patients using an injectable methotrexate product should continue to be maintained on the same product. It is important that patients are maintained on the brand they have been trained on and it is therefore recommended that the intended device is prescribed by brand (generic prescribing is discouraged).

It is also worth noting that the [Metoject PEN](#) has recently undergone a change in design, to a button free pen. All patients are trained by secondary care teams to appropriately use the device they are prescribed. The [manufacturer's website](#) also has patient information including a video on use of the pen to support patient understanding.

## Disposal of waste medicines in Dorset

Since 2004, all community pharmacies must act as a collection point for waste medicines from the general public. Returned medicines can be accepted from 'households', individuals and charity-run hospices. This includes medicines but does not include sharps or non-medicine waste, such as dialysis kits.

The term 'household' is taken to include residential homes/care homes but not nursing homes. Nursing homes must have their own waste licence and arrangements to dispose of returned patient medicines. Sometimes this can cause confusion as a home may be a mixture of nursing and care/residential home, but the mixed rules would apply. Care homes can't return waste with a driver unless the pharmacy has a waste transport licence which they generally don't.

Community pharmacies are not obligated to take medicines from GP surgeries. Patients prescribed injectable medicines should also be prescribed a suitable sharps disposal container, which is returned to their GP surgery for safe disposal when full and sealed. Drug misuse related sharps should be taken to a community pharmacy that provides the needle exchange service. Refer to the [Public Health Dorset list of needle exchange providers](#).

## Oral semaglutide (Rybelsus®)

We have received reports that some community pharmacies are asking GP practices to prescribe semaglutide tablets by brand (Rybelsus®) on the basis that semaglutide is a biological medicine. Whilst semaglutide is listed as a biological medicine in [the BNF](#), and is considered as such because it is manufactured using recombinant DNA technology, there is currently no need to prescribe it by brand, as Rybelsus® is the only brand available.

If/when another brand of oral semaglutide becomes available then prescribing by brand name would be recommended to avoid brand switching which might lead to variability in dosing. As Rybelsus® is the only brand available at this time, pharmacies will be remunerated for supplying Rybelsus® even when it is prescribed generically.

### Quick bites

- The Dorset Formulary is available at: [www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk](http://www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk).
- GlucoRx Care Point and Care Point Ultra insulin needles (lancets) have been added to the formulary as the most current cost effective first choices. They have a universal fit on all insulin pen brands including Eli Lilly®, Novo Nordisk AS®, Becton Dickinson®, Owen Mumford® and Sanofi®.
- The Spring 2024 edition of the [TIAA Fraud Stop Healthcare](#) newsletter is now available. It features emerging fraud trends identified, case studies and methods of fraud prevention.

### Quick bites continued

- A [new five-year plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance](#) in the UK has been launched by the Department of Health and Social Care. The plan builds on the progress already made in tackling antimicrobial resistance. It emphasises the importance of supporting decision-making to ensure that antibiotics are targeted to the patients most likely to benefit. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to take advantage of evidence-based resources such as the [TARGET toolkit](#) and [‘Start smart then focus’](#).
- [Switching strategies for antidepressants](#) – SPS guidance describes following antidepressant switching strategies and their application: cross-taper, direct switch, taper, stop and switch, taper, washout and switch, stop, washout and switch, and individual switches.

### REGIONAL MEDICINES INFORMATION SERVICE

If you work in primary care (including community pharmacy), specialist medicines advice can be obtained from SPS via **0300 7708564** or email [asksps.nhs@sps.direct](mailto:asksps.nhs@sps.direct). (Staff in Dorset NHS Trusts should seek advice from their pharmacy teams).