

Reducing Waste of Inhaled Corticosteroid Inhalers

Aim/Purpose/Background

- To identify patients prescribed ICS for asthma and/or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and to reduce over ordering and waste.

Guidance for Action

Approve actions (Option A or Option B) with prescribing lead/Asthma nurse as appropriate

Exclude any patients using combinations inhalers TWICE daily with additional AS REQUIRED dosing

Option A:

Amend issue duration to the life of inhaler according to current use i.e 200 dose inhaler at 1 puff BD would last 100 days. This may cause problems for those patients with limited mobility/transport who may not be able to request/collect RX for inhaler at different times to their other medications and could cause compliance issues. Those patients on managed repeats will not have a repeat form to order the inhaler for their first issue. Consider printing a spare repeat form and attach with a leaflet/note to patients next repeat when issued.

Option B:

Amend the number of issues allowed in a 6 month period according to current use i.e. 200 dose inhaler at 1 puff BD would last 100 days so max of 2 inhalers in a six month period. This would allow patients to continue to collect their inhaler at the same time as their other medicines. They would merely have a month or two's "holiday" where they would not receive an inhaler.

- Search for patients on clinical systems using an ICS inhaler. Filter by dose/quantity/issues as appropriate (see attached chart for shelf life of inhalers).
- Update dosage directions or add RX note to read "At current dose this inhaler will last **** weeks. Please only order every ***** months/weeks.
- Adjust issue duration or number of issues allowed as agreed and appropriate.
- Agree with prescribing lead/asthma nurse mode of communication with patients. Consider if a one off RX note would be appropriate or if a leaflet should be distributed.
- Inform RX clerks and request that issues are not given early unless there is a specific need i.e holiday supply, lost/faulty inhaler.

Inform local community pharmacies that managed repeat requests will not be fulfilled if ordered early.

Corticosteroid Inhaler Repeat Prescriptions

How long should an inhaler last?

The table below indicates how long an inhaled corticosteroid preparation is expected to last at different dosages for different pack sizes.

Name of Inhaler	No. of doses per inhaler	No. of doses per day	Period inhaler should cover (approx)
Clenil, Qvar Budesonide 100mcg, 200mcg Pulmicort 100mcg turbohaler,	200	One puff twice a day	100 days (3months)
	200	Two puffs twice a day	50 days (6-7 weeks)
Pulmicort MDI, Symbicort 100/6, 200/6 Seretide Flixotide evohalers,Fostair, DuoResp Spiromax 160/4.5	120	One puff twice a day	60 days (8 weeks)
	120	Two puffs twice a day	30 days (4 weeks)
Budesonide 400mcg Pulmicort 200mcg turbohaler	100	One puff twice a day	50 days (6-7 weeks)
	100	Two puffs twice a day	25 days (3-4 weeks)
Seretide accuhaler Flixotide accuhaler, diskhaler, Symbicort 400/12,DuoResp Spiromax 320/9	60	One puff twice a day	30 days (4 weeks)
	60	Two puffs twice a day	15 days (2 weeks)



Pulmicort 400mcg turbohaler	50	One puff twice daily	25 days (3-4 weeks)
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Patients should, of course, ensure that they do not run out of their inhalers but should not re-order them before they need to.

Inhaler Housekeeping Suggested Letter/Rx note

Sample Letter

Dear (INSERT PATIENT NAME)

As a practice we continually monitor our prescribing to ensure that our patients receive the most cost effective and medically appropriate treatment. We are presently working very closely with the Medicines Management Team and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.

We are committed to using NHS resources in the best possible way and with this in mind we have been reviewing the supply of Inhaled Corticosteroid inhalers used in the treatment of Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

Many of these inhalers will last for longer than 28 days, however often they are ordered every month. This results in either an excess of inhalers in patient's homes or unnecessary waste.

With this in mind the practice have decided to change the way in which Inhaled Corticosteroid Inhalers are issued. You are currently receiving:

NAME OF INHALER/DOSE/QUANTITY – this inhaler will last ** days/weeks/months at the current dose.**

Option A - Your repeat template has been updated so that this inhaler can only be repeated every **days/weeks/months. If you are on a managed repeat with your Pharmacy this means you will need to order this at different times to any other medication you may be taking. A separate repeat form has been attached for you to do this.**

Option B - Your repeat template has been updated so that this inhaler can only be repeated ** times in a ** weeks/month period. If you are on a managed repeat with your Pharmacy this means that you may still collect your inhaler with any other medications but it will only be issued * times in ** weeks/months.**

In the current economic climate it is essential that NHS resources are used wisely and all medication is prescribed in the most cost effective way. However, if you would like to discuss this further or would appreciate additional information about this change please telephone me on **NUMBER** and I will be happy to discuss this with you. Alternatively you may contact to your surgery in the usual way.

Yours sincerely

