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AllWales.Alerts@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 4th February 2021

Welsh Government – CPhO 2021 005
(Disruption to the supply of Levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets)

This alert has been cascaded to the following:

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All Wales GP OOHs
All Wales Sessional GPs
All Wales Pharmacies
All Wales HB Primary Care Managers
All Wales HB Pharmacy & Prescribing Advisors
All Wales Medical Committees
All Wales Pharmacy Committees
All Wales Prisons – Health Care Managers
All Wales Hospices
All Wales Independent Hospitals



MEDICINES SHORTAGE ADVISORY GROUP WALES MEDICINE SHORTAGE

Distribution: As Annex 1

From: Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Date: 4 February 2021

Reference: CPhO/MedsLet/2021/05

Category: Level 2

Title: Disruption to the supply of levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets and availability of a Serious Shortage Protocol

For Action by:

- All General Practitioners and dispensing practices – For information and please retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.
- Community Pharmacists-Action and information as below
- Chief Pharmacists. Action and information as below

Timeframe: With immediate effect

For Information: See Annex 1- Distribution List

SUMMARY:

Due to a supply issue with levothyroxine 12.5 microgram (mcg) tablets a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) has been issued.

This SSP allows community pharmacists in Wales to supply patients with 25mcg levothyroxine tablets against a prescription for levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets. The quantity supplied and dosing instructions will need to be amended in accordance with the SSP.

The SSP is available on the NHS BSA website

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/serious-shortage-protocols-ssps>

Currently this SPP is due to expire on Friday 5 March 2021. Should there be any changes to the SSP, including a change to the expiry date, the SSP will be updated on the NHS BSA website.

BACKGROUND

- Levothyroxine is indicated in the management of hypothyroidism
- Teva are the sole manufacturer and expect to be out of stock until late February/ early March 2021.
- Prescribing data for primary care shows there are around 500 prescriptions per month in Wales for levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets, equating to fewer than one patient per general practice and fewer than one prescription per pharmacy per month on average.
- An SSP is a tool to support the management of medicines shortages. It enables community pharmacists to supply a specified medicine or device in accordance with a protocol rather than a prescription, with the patient's consent and, without needing to seek authorisation from the prescriber.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- The decision to supply any medicine under this protocol rests with the individual registered pharmacist who must abide by the protocol.
- Whilst pharmacy staff may support the dispensing process of the protocol, this must be carried out under the supervision of the registered pharmacist.
- Pharmacists using this SSP must ensure that it is only used within its authorised dates and within the criteria set out within the SSP. Pharmacists must check that they are using the current version of the SSP. Amendments may become necessary prior to the published expiry date. Current versions of SSP templates can be found at <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/serious-shortage-protocols-ssps>
- Users must not amend or add to the SSP; such action will invalidate the SSP.
- To support prescribers and pharmacists two documents have been prepared providing information and guidance on SSPs. These are a short FAQs document and more detailed operational guidance. Both are available in the Medicines Shortage Log which can be accessed via the NHS intranet: <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=428&pid=77202>

QUERIES:

For all queries:

Medicinesshortages@gov.wales

Information about current medicines shortages can be found at:

<http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=428&pid=77202>

PUBLICATION:

Welsh Government Medicines Shortage Letters are published on the Public Health Wales Link system:

<https://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk/contacts.nsf?login&opendatabase&redirectto=contacts.nsf>

Copy recipients should ensure they have access to this system.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Evans

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Specialist Pharmacist- Contingency
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