



Daily Update

Tuesday 18th August 2020

This daily update contains important information for community pharmacy teams about the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In today's update: new public health organisation; supporting safe use of OTC stimulant laxatives.

New organisation to take on public health role

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced its intention to establish a new healthcare organisation responsible for infectious diseases management and public health initiatives.

The National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) has begun by taking over the reins from Public Health England (PHE) and NHS Test and Trace on the COVID-19 pandemic response. From spring 2021, it will also lead on protecting the nation's health.

[Further details on the creation of the NIHP](#)

New measures to support safe use of stimulant laxatives available over-the-counter

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has introduced pack size restrictions, revised recommended ages for use, and new safety warnings for over-the-counter stimulant laxatives (orally and rectally administered) following a national safety review.

Stimulant laxatives available in the UK over-the-counter are bisacodyl (such as Dulcolax), senna and sennosides (isolated, as calcium salts; such as Senokot), and sodium picosulfate (such as Dulcolax Pico).

The safety of stimulant laxatives has been under close review by the MHRA for many years following concerns relating to misuse and abuse.

[Learn more about changes to stimulant laxatives to support safety](#)

Have you seen our latest COVID-19 related FAQs?

PSNC's COVID-19 hub has an **[FAQs page](#)** with a large number of answers to queries posed by pharmacy contractors, their teams and LPCs; these are being updated on a regular basis. Recent additions include:

Q. What does PSNC advise that pharmacy teams do during the pandemic?

Guidance for pharmacies has been published by NHSE&I but the situation is evolving rapidly and guidance is therefore being updated on a very regular basis. Our general guidance is that pharmacy contractors and their teams:

1. Read the **NHSE&I guidance** whenever it is updated and implement its recommended actions;
2. Clearly display the **COVID-19 posters** at points of entry to your pharmacy;
3. Complete a **risk review** for your pharmacy and put steps in place to mitigate any risks identified;
4. **All pharmacy staff should now wear facemasks**, unless the pharmacy is COVID-19 secure, including all staff being able to maintain a social distance from one another.
5. Implement your **business continuity plan** where required and seek assistance and advice from your **Local Pharmaceutical Committee**;
6. Keep up to date with developments by regularly checking the information on **COVID-19 on GOV.UK**, the **NHSE&I Coronavirus Primary Care webpage** and checking your NHSmail shared mailbox on a regular basis for updates from NHSE&I; and
7. Where possible, display the **public health advice posters** on hand washing, social distancing etc

The latest information from PSNC on COVID-19 is available on our webpage: psnc.org.uk/coronavirus

[Find answers to more of your questions here](#)

Keep up-to-date on COVID-19 with our hub page: psnc.org.uk/coronavirus

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee



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