

Position Statement: Self-care with Vitamin D3 (colecalciferol) for maintenance or prevention of deficiency

As part of its self-care strategy, in line with [National Guidance](#), NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB does not support the prescribing of Vitamin D3 (colecalciferol) for maintenance or prevention of deficiency.

This includes for all residents within care home settings.

Patients should be advised to purchase these products over the counter (OTC).

However, where implementation of this guidance is not immediately possible, Valupak® Vitamin D3 1000 unit tablets should be prescribed as an interim measure wherever possible. This is a cost-effective measure.

Recommendations:

- Vitamin D3 (colecalciferol) can be easily purchased from a pharmacy, in supermarkets or online and patients should be encouraged to buy supplements for maintenance treatment or prevention of deficiency.
- Prescriptions for vitamin D3 should be reserved for the treatment of patients who meet the criteria for prescribing – [see below](#).
- Note that patients who are deficient should be prescribed a loading dose, but subsequent maintenance doses should then be purchased OTC as per APC vitamin D guidelines for [adults](#) and [children](#).
- Patients prescribed colecalciferol (generic or brand) up to 2000units / 50micrograms per day should be moved to self-care unless they meet any of the criteria for prescribing listed [below](#).
- Where implementation of this guidance is not immediately possible, Valupak® Vitamin D3 1000 unit tablets should be prescribed **as an interim measure** wherever possible. This is a cost-effective measure.
- **Care homes** are required to purchase and provide suitable vitamin D supplements for their residents. Being in a care home does not mean people are exempt from self-care. People in care homes are at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency due to difficulty getting outside. Both Public Health England guidance and CQC regulations advise that care home providers are expected to support their residents full nutritional needs including supplementation with vitamin D ([Vitamin D and care homes guidance](#)). Note that the government scheme to provide vitamin D to care homes during the pandemic has now ended.
- **Free Healthy Start vitamins are available for those on the Healthy Start scheme* for pregnancy or children between the ages 6 months to their fourth birthday.**
*People need to be claiming certain benefits to qualify for the Healthy Start scheme or be pregnant and under 18. (NB this is not on prescription but commissioned separately). More information can be obtained from <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>.
- Prescribers should advise patients on safe and effective self-care measures to maintain/improve vitamin D levels through lifestyle and by directing them to appropriate sources of information e.g. [NHS Website](#), [Notts APC Vitamin D self-care leaflet](#) and [The Self Care Forum](#).
- Patients can seek advice directly with the Community Pharmacist or via referral from the GP Surgery using the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS). The advantage of the CPCS referral is that the outcome of the consultation is sent to the GP surgery so that this can be included in the GP patient record.

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Nottingham and
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- See Notts APC [Vitamin D Management in Adults](#) and [Vitamin D Management in Children](#) for prescribing advice and patient information.

Prescribing is appropriate for:

- Patients with a medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition or have undergone surgery that results in malabsorption. Continuing need should however be reviewed on a regular basis. Note that after loading, subsequent **maintenance** doses should be purchased OTC unless one of the other prescribing criteria in this list applies. Note that following bariatric surgery vitamin D **maintenance** dose should be continued and purchased OTC – see local [bariatric surgery guidance](#).
- Patients receiving calcium and vitamin D products or Vitamin D preparations alone for osteoporosis or osteopenia. Other excluded groups include patients treated with hyperparathyroidism, hypercalcaemia and patients receiving parenteral osteoporosis treatment.
- Patients with malnutrition including alcoholism (see [NICE guidance](#)).
- Patients receiving prescription-only vitamin D analogues such as alfacalcidol.
- Note that the general exception criteria in the NHSE guidance do not apply to vitamin D.

Rationale:

- Vitamin D is a food supplement.
- Vitamin D supplements can be bought easily and are inexpensive.
- Maintenance vitamin D treatment is recommended in PHE guidance, but the guidance contains no indication that this needs to be prescribed.

References

NHS England, NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in Primary Care: Guidance for CCGs. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/> (accessed online June 2023)

Version Control - Position Statement - Self-care with Vitamin D3 for maintenance or prevention of deficiency			
Version	Author(s)	Date	Changes
1.0	Greater Nottingham CCG	April 2018	
2.0	Medicines Optimisation Team, Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB <i>Ratified by ICB Medicines Optimisation and Governance Group 14/06/2023</i>	June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changed from CCG to ICB.• Added links to NHSE national OTC guidance• Added link to Notts APC Management of Vitamin D in Adults/Children• Added wording from National Guidance for rationale for self-care. Noted that general exceptions do not apply.• Added statement about care homes.