

Prescribing Hints & Tips

January 2026

MHRA DRUG SAFETY UPDATE: IMPROVING INFORMATION SUPPLIED WITH GABAPENTINOID (PREGABALIN/GABAPENTIN), BENZODIAZEPINES, AND Z DRUGS.

The MHRA has reviewed the warnings regarding **addiction, dependence, withdrawal, and tolerance** for **gabapentin, pregabalin, benzodiazepines, and z-drugs**. The main finding is that patients should be better informed of such known risks. The outer packaging, Patient Information Leaflets, and Summary of Product Characteristics are all to have strengthened warnings regarding the risks. The [Drug Safety Update](#) contains further advice for health care professionals and links to further resources.

SAYANA PRESS® (MEDROXYPROGESTERONE ACETATE) SAFE DISPOSAL: PURPLE LIDDED SHARPS BINS

Sayana Press® (medroxyprogesterone acetate) is a pre-filled injection device licenced for contraceptive use. As this medicine is a synthetic injectable hormone, a **purple lidded** sharps bin should be provided for those self-injecting. Practices are asked to please check that any patients prescribed these devices have a purple lidded sharps bin on their repeat with an issue duration of 365 days. See [here](#) for details on local disposal arrangements.

FREESTYLE LIBRE 3 AND 3 PLUS RESTRICTED USE

Prescribing data shows there is some prescribing of Freestyle Libre 3 and 3 plus sensors for Type 2 diabetic patients. As per the Nottingham formulary, Freestyle Libre 3 and 3 plus sensors are restricted to:

- For patients with **Type 1 diabetes** who are 4 years or older for use as part of a hybrid closed loop (HCL) system ONLY
- CGM sensor for use as part of HCL in pregnancy and in preconception
- Freestyle Libre 3 is NOT interchangeable with Freestyle Libre 2

Prescribing of Freestyle Libre 3 and 3 plus sensors outside of these restrictions should be reviewed and switched to Freestyle Libre 2 plus. Switched patients should be informed of the change as they may need to adjust their app.

RELAUNCH OF THE COST EFFICIENCY SCHEME

The ICB funded cost effective switch scheme to change repeat prescriptions to cost effective versions is being run again. Emails have been sent to practices that didn't achieve the 80% payment threshold with full details and the options to continue or sign up.

If you haven't received an e-mail please contact MEDSOPTIMISATIONSUPPORT nnicb-nn.medoptimisation.support@nhs.net

Quick summary

All switches must be completed by 31st march 2026

Any changes that your practice has already made will count towards your achievement. Details can be found on teamnet:

<https://teamnet.clarity.co.uk/library/viewitem/10b01c1e-bd73-494c-83de-b33f00d1b237>

Cost-effective changes:

Note that Proxor® inhaler brand is an additional, even lower cost, alternative to Fostair®. It has the same propellant as Bibecfo® and Fostair® which may make it better tolerated than Luforbec® when switching.

	Current version	Cost effective version
Inhalers	Fostair® inhaler	Proxor ®or bibecfo® or luforbec®
	Clenil® inhaler	Soprobec®
Brand to generic	Utrogestan® oral capsules 100mg	Progesterone micronized oral capsules 100mg
	Sukkarto® sr 1000mg and 500mg tablets	Metformin mr 1000mg & 500mg tablets
	Vagifem® 10microgram vaginal tablets	Estradiol 10microgram pessaries
	Circadin® 2mg modified-release tablets	Melatonin mr 2mg tablets
Cost effective brand	Maintenance dose colecalciferol including 800 and 1000units (all brands other than valupak and generic prescribing). No change to treatment doses.	Valupak® vitamin d food supplement

Payment is either:

20p per carr-hill weighted patient on practice list (on 1 Feb 2026) if 80% or more of repeat prescribing of all of the below medicines is prescribed as the cost-effective version on 31st March 2026

Or:

10p per carr-hill weighted patient on practice list (on 1 Feb 2026) if 60% or more of repeat prescribing of all of the below medicines is prescribed as the cost-effective version on 31st March 2026.

SMART INSULIN PENS

NovoPen® 6 and NovoPen Echo® Plus are reusable insulin pens compatible with Novo Nordisk insulin cartridges.



NovoPen® 6



NovoPen Echo® Plus

Each pen has a dose memory display that shows the last dose taken, and the time that has passed. NovoPen Echo Plus offers half unit increments. It is important that pens accompany individuals into hospital to avoid new pens having to be issued and potential confusion around pen colour, insulin and dose.

Please remind patients, carers and colleagues in social and primary care settings, that the pens should accompany the patient into hospital to help our secondary care health care professionals.

CARE HOME AND HOME CARE GUIDANCE

A reminder that range of guidance and documents relating to medicines management in care homes and in home based care are available on the [medicines management website](#).

APC AND INTERFACE UPDATE

The latest updates from APC can be found on their website [here](#).

MAILING LIST

If you wish to be added or removed from the Prescribing Hints and Tips mailing list, please email e.moncrieff@nhs.net