



Issue 121

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HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): fast facts

- * PrEP for HIV is a combination tablet prescribed free of charge to people at risk of acquiring HIV in Scotland.
- * PrEP can currently only be prescribed from Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (and locality services attached to these). There is currently no mechanism for PrEP prescribing in general practice in Scotland.¹
- * www.prep.scot details the eligibility criteria for PrEP. Prior to starting, a medical history focusing on renal and bone health is required, as well as a negative HIV test (or an HIV test performed 4-6 weeks after starting if within window period).
- * Each tablet of PrEP contains tenofovir and emtricitabine, and has been used to prevent HIV since 2012. The SMC approved its use in April 2017 for this indication.¹
- * Dosing can be daily (continuous PrEP) or on-demand dosing (this method is not suitable for some patients, and should be discussed with a specialist).
- * There are few significant interactions between PrEP and other drugs, but beware of renal toxicity with NSAIDs, particularly with diclofenac sodium. When prescribing other medications, ensure there is no risk of interactions with PrEP. The HIV Drug Interactions website can be used, in addition to BNF and Stockley, because it contains comprehensive evidence-based tables of drug interactions between the HIV drugs and other medicines.²

Useful information:

- ⇒ Around 1 in 10 people report mild nausea, gastrointestinal disturbance, bloating and headache. These usually stop within the first month.³
- ⇒ People with swallowing difficulties may disperse the tablet in half a glass of water, orange juice or grape juice.⁴ Check the manufacturer's advice.
- ⇒ To be added to the PrEP waiting list, patients in NHS Lothian can self-refer on 0131 536 1138 or present to Chalmers. GPs can also refer.⁵
- ⇒ Currently there is only a few weeks wait for a PrEP start appointment at Chalmers, but people can also self-source at www.iwantprepnnow.co.uk. This webpage can be signposted to all patients as a useful source of information.



References

1. Lothian Sexual Health. HIV PrEP. www.lothiansexualhealth.scot/prep-2/prep/.
2. HIV Drug Interactions. www.hiv-druginteractions.org.
3. PrEP in Scotland booklet. i-base. July 2018. PrEP In Scotland 2nd Ed Final.pdf.
4. Emtricitabine with tenofovir disoproxil. BNF. NICE. bnf.nice.org.uk/drugs/emtricitabine-with-tenofovir-disoproxil.
5. RefHelp. Sexual and Reproductive Health. HIV. HIV PrEP and PEPSE. apps.nhslothian.scot/refhelp/guidelines/sexualreprohealth/hiv/hivpreppepse.

Statins: very infrequent reports of myasthenia gravis

Drug safety update: Volume 17 Issue 2 September 2023



Myasthenia Gravis (MG) is an autoimmune condition categorised by muscle weakness which occurs as a result of a defect in the action of acetylcholine at neuromuscular junctions. Symptoms include droopy eyelids, difficulty making facial expressions, neck and limb weakness and swallowing, speaking and breathing difficulties.

Some medications can worsen or induce MG, therefore it is important to check for specialist advice before starting any new medications in this patient cohort. A recent drug safety update from the MHRA has reported that statins have been associated with new onset or aggravation of pre-existing MG. In the majority of these cases, patients recovered after stopping statin treatment and the advice for patients with pre-existing MG is to stay alert to any aggravation of their symptoms whilst taking a statin. Although reports have been infrequent relative to the widespread use of statins within the population, this update can serve as a reminder to check the safety of new medications for patients with MG before prescribing. See the resources available below to check the clinical suitability of medications:

- ◆ Myaware. www.myaware.org/drugs-to-avoid. This document is aimed at patients but provides useful information on drugs to avoid in MG and is recommended on the East Region Formulary.
- ◆ NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Guidance. Myasthenia Gravis or Lambert-Eaton Myasthenia Syndrome, medicines that may affect patients. rightdecisions.scot.nhs.uk/media/2273/myasthenia-gravis-3.pdf. This guideline includes a table which categorises medications as absolutely contraindicated, to be avoided, to use with caution and probably safe.
- ◆ Stockley's Drug Interactions. www.medicinescomplete.com/#/content/stockley/11.2Table. Stockley's has a table of case reports of medications aggravating or unmasking myasthenia gravis.
- ◆ Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America. myasthenia.org/MG-Community/Cautionary-Drugs. The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America provides a list of cautionary drugs. Please note that this is an American resource therefore some terms, licensing and drug names may differ.

Prescribing on HEPMA

Please consider adding a patient note on HEPMA for all patients with MG to highlight their diagnosis, and the importance of checking the safety of new medications. Use the title 'Patient with Myasthenia Gravis' and tick 'Retain note between spells'. Appropriate resources can be linked in this note, or printed and added to the patient's folder.

Prescribing in general practice

The Vision prescribing system will alert prescribers when trying to prescribe statins to be aware of the link with MG.

KEY MESSAGES

- ◆ Statins have been infrequently associated with new onset or aggravation of MG.
- ◆ Utilise specialist resources before prescribing new medications to patients with MG.
- ◆ Stay vigilant to adverse reactions associated with statins and report these to the MHRA via the Yellow Card Scheme. You can submit a report online via the Yellow Card Scheme yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/.

Thanks to Emily Dodd, Rotational Pharmacist, who contributed this article.

Drug Safety Updates - 6 month catch up

Codeine linctus: public consultation on the proposal to reclassify to a prescription-only medicine
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/codeine-linctus-public-consultation-on-the-proposal-to-reclassify-to-a-prescription-only-medicine

Hyoscine hydrobromide patches (Scopoderm 1.5mg Patch or Scopoderm TTS Patch): risk of anticholinergic side effects, including hyperthermia
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/hyoscine-hydrobromide-patches-scopoderm-1-dot-5mg-patch-or-scopoderm-tts-patch-risk-of-anticholinergic-side-effects-including-hyperthermia

Valproate: re-analysis of study on risks in children of men taking valproate
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/valproate-re-analysis-of-study-on-risks-in-children-of-men-taking-valproate

Methotrexate: advise patients to take precautions in the sun to avoid photosensitivity reactions
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/methotrexate-advise-patients-to-take-precautions-in-the-sun-to-avoid-photosensitivity-reactions

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics: reminder of the risk of disabling and potentially long-lasting or irreversible side effects
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/fluoroquinolone-antibiotics-reminder-of-the-risk-of-disabling-and-potentially-long-lasting-or-irreversible-side-effects

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics: suicidal thoughts and behaviour
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/fluoroquinolone-antibiotics-suicidal-thoughts-and-behaviour

Statins: very infrequent reports of myasthenia gravis
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/statins-very-infrequent-reports-of-myasthenia-gravis

Valproate: dispense full packs of valproate-containing medicines
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/valproate-dispense-full-packs-of-valproate-containing-medicines

MedSafetyWeek November 2023: your Yellow Card report helps to improve patient safety
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/medsafetyweek-november-2023-your-yellow-card-report-helps-to-improve-patient-safety

Isotretinoin (Roaccutane): introduction of new safety measures, including additional oversight of the initiation of treatment for patients under 18 years of age
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/isotretinoin-roaccutanev-introduction-of-new-safety-measures-including-additional-oversight-of-the-initiation-of-treatment-for-patients-under-18-years-of-age

E-cigarette use or vaping: reminder to remain vigilant for suspected adverse reactions and safety concerns and report them to the Yellow Card scheme
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/e-cigarette-use-or-vaping-reminder-to-remain-vigilant-for-suspected-adverse-reactions-and-safety-concerns-and-report-them-to-the-yellow-card-scheme

Nirmatrelvir, ritonavir (Paxlovid): be alert to the risk of drug interactions with ritonavir
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/nirmatrelvir-ritonavir-paxlovidv-be-alert-to-the-risk-of-drug-interactions-with-ritonavir

Ozempic (semaglutide) and Saxenda (liraglutide): vigilance required due to potentially harmful falsified products
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/ozempicv-semaglutide-and-saxenda-liraglutide-vigilance-required-due-to-potentially-harmful-falsified-products

[More over the page](#)

Drug Safety Updates – 6 month catch up cont'd..

Vitamin B12 (hydroxocobalamin, cyanocobalamin): advise patients with known cobalt allergy to be vigilant for sensitivity reactions

www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/vitamin-b12-hydroxocobalamin-cyanocobalamin-advise-patients-with-known-cobalt-allergy-to-be-vigilant-for-sensitivity-reactions

Aripiprazole (Abilify and generic brands): risk of pathological gambling

www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/aripiprazole-abilify-and-generic-brands-risk-of-pathological-gambling

Omega-3-acid ethyl ester medicines (Omacor/Teromeg 1000mg capsules): dose-dependent increased risk of atrial fibrillation in patients with established cardiovascular diseases or cardiovascular risk factors

www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/omega-3-acid-ethyl-ester-medicines-omacor-slash-teromeg-1000mg-capsules-dose-dependent-increased-risk-of-atrial-fibrillation-in-patients-with-established-cardiovascular-diseases-or-cardiovascular-risk-factors

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics: must now only be prescribed when other commonly recommended antibiotics are inappropriate

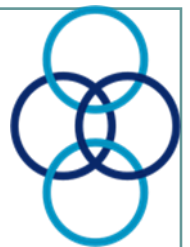
www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/fluoroquinolone-antibiotics-must-now-only-be-prescribed-when-other-commonly-recommended-antibiotics-are-inappropriate

Valproate (Belvo, Convulex, Depakote, Dyzantil, Epilim, Epilim Chrono or Chronosphere, Episenta, Epival, and Syonell): new safety and educational materials to support regulatory measures in men and women under 55 years of age

www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/valproate-belvo-convulex-depakote-dyzantil-epilim-epilim-chrono-or-chronosphere-episenta-epival-and-syonelly-new-safety-and-educational-materials-to-support-regulatory-measures-in-men-and-women-under-55-years-of-age

East Region Formulary - update of changes August to November 2023

The summary of formulary amendments including formulary applications, chapter reviews and additions and removals can now be viewed at erf-update-of-changes-aug-nov-2023.pdf (nhs.scot).



Prescribing communications – have your say!

We would like to hear from you about how we can improve communications relating to prescribing, which may include formulary updates, medicines safety and medicines supply.

Please complete the survey accessed [here](#) or scan the QR code below:

