



Department of Health,
P.O. Box 5013
Wellington.

10 July 1979.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER No. 188

To Medical and Dental Practitioners

(Copy to Proprietors of Retail Pharmacies)

DRUG TARIFF 1979, AMENDMENT No. 1: EFFECTIVE 1 AUGUST 1979

This Clinical Services Letter will be the only record most will have to the present changes to the Tariff. As it is not a cumulative list it is suggested that this Letter, along with earlier Clinical Services Letters, should be retained for reference purposes.

1. To be available from retail pharmacy:

Additions—

Dexamethasone with framycetin sulphate and nystatin as ear ointment (Sofrastatin)

Ketoprofen suppositories (Orudis)

Changed availability—

Beclamide (Nydrane)

Clofazimine (Lamprene)

Clonazepam (Rivotril)

Tripotassium dicitratobismuthate solution (De Nol)

2. To be available from a retail pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of an appropriate specialist:

Additions—

Calcium polystyrene sulphonate (Calcium Resonium)

Fluorouracil sodium oral solution (Fluorouracil)

Vidarabine eye ointment (Vira-A)

Changed availability—

Baclofen tablets (Lioresal)

Betamethasone disodium phosphate tablets (Betnesol)

Carbenoxolone sodium tablets (Biogastrone)

Chloramphenicol capsules, syrup and injection (Chloromycetin)

Clindamycin (Dalacin C)
 Dantrolene sodium capsules (Dantrium)
 Dexamethasone tablets
 Dipyridamole injection and tablets (Persantin)
 Dydrogesterone tablets (Duphaston)
 Frusemide infusion and tablets 500 mg (Frusid, Lasix)
 Methoxsalen (Oxsoralen)
 Methylprednisolone tablets (Medrol)
 Methysergide dimaleate (Deseril)
 Pancreatin proprietary preparations (Combizym, Combizym Compositum, Cotazym, Cotazym B, Viokase)
 Penicillamine hydrochloride (Penicillamine)
 Pimozide tablets (Orap)
 Sodium polystyrene sulphonate (Resonium-A)
 Spectinomycin hydrochloride (Trobicin)
 Thiopropazine mesylate (Majeptil)
 Thiothixene oral solution (Navane)
 Triamcinolone tablets (Kenacort)
 Trioxsalen tablets (Trisoralen)

These medicines have been transferred from "hospital pharmacy—specialist" restriction to "retail pharmacy—specialist" with the intention of reducing pressure on hospital pharmacists. This change does not represent a fresh opinion on the current therapeutic status of these products.

3. To be available from hospital pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of an appropriate specialist:

Additions—

Distigmine bromide (Ubretid)
 Flucytosine infusion (Alcobon infusion)
 Sodium nitroprusside infusion (Nipride)

Distigmine bromide has been included on the Drug Tariff as a replacement for carbachol which is no longer available. Distigmine (Ubretid) is an expensive product and economy in its use is requested.

4. To be available only on a wholesale supply order:

Dexamethasone sodium phosphate injection (Decadron, Oradexon)

5. To be available only on a practitioner's supply order:

Neomycin sulphate with polymyxin B sulphate and bacitracin zinc aerosol (Neosporin)

6. Not to be available on a bulk supply order:

Spirit, cologne, industrial.

7. To be available from retail pharmacy on the prescription of an ophthalmologist as well as on the prescription of an oncologist, plastic surgeon, or dermatologist:

Fluorouracil topical solution and topical cream (Efudix, Fluoroplex)

8. Deleted from the Drug Tariff:

Thyroid

Thyroid (fresh gland) tablets.

9. Benzodiazepine minor tranquillisers:

For many years there has been concern at the high rate of usage of the benzodiazepine minor tranquillisers. Although usage has dropped a little it still causes concern. The estimated figures are:

Year ending 31 March	Number of Doses
1971	110 million
1972	107 million
1973	106 million
1974	104 million
1978	91 million or 30 tablets per year for every New Zealander.

No statistics are available for the years ending 31 March 1975, 1976, and 1977.

While it is accepted that short term use of these medicines may often be appropriate and useful, the long term continuing use of minor tranquillisers is much more open to criticism. The Department of Health is of the opinion that such usage should be kept to a minimum.

Accordingly, from 1 August 1979 payment will be made only for a maximum quantity sufficient for 30 days treatment on any one prescription form. Payment will not be made for repeat supplies. This restriction has the support of the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee and its effects will be reviewed by the committee after 1 year. Payment will be made for repeats prescribed before 1 August.

The medicines affected are:

Chlordiazepoxide and its hydrochloride

Diazepam capsules, syrup and tablets

Lorazepam tablets

Oxazepam tablets

COST/EFFICACY REVIEW OF THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

From 1 August Balnetar will carry a part-charge to the patient. It is considered to be too expensive in comparison with other products in the same group.

At its next meeting the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee will again review tricyclic antidepressants.

GLUTETHIMIDE

Usage of glutethimide (Doriden) has been considered by the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee. The committee is strongly of the opinion that glutethimide should not be considered as a satisfactory alternative to barbiturate prescribing.

Therapeutic dosage can produce rashes, blurred vision, excitement and nausea and prolonged use is known to have produced toxic psychoses, convulsions, cerebellar ataxia, peripheral neuropathy and may lead to dependence of the barbiturate-alcohol type.

Although overdosage has not occurred commonly in New Zealand, it may nevertheless produce severe intoxication which may show variability in level, be prolonged, and be dangerous.

PLANOSEC

Planosec pregnancy test is a latex agglutination slide test which can be stored at room temperature and has a shelf life of 2 years.

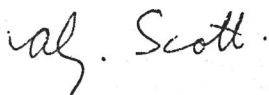
This test is considerably more expensive than Gravindex and Prepurex and was included in the Drug Tariff only as being suitable for those practitioners who do not have a refrigerator in their surgery. The opinion has been expressed that there is no longer any excuse for not supplying refrigeration in a modern surgery.

Notice is therefore given of the intention to remove Planosec from the Drug Tariff as from 1 December if no valid objections are received.

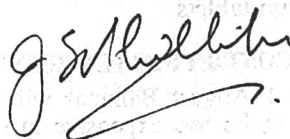
U100 INSULIN

Following the lead of the United States and Canada it is intended to change all insulin available in New Zealand to 100unit/ml strength. Australia is also currently planning this change and arrangements are now being initiated in New Zealand for the new strength of insulin and suitable syringes to be available from 1 March 1981. It is hoped that the changeover will be completed within approximately 12 months from that date.

This change is being arranged with the advice and assistance of the medical advisory panel of the Diabetes Association of New Zealand and the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes. This is only a preliminary notice and full details will be published at a later date.



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