

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

10 November 1980.



CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER No. 197

To Medical and Dental Practitioners

(Copy to Proprietors of Retail Pharmacies)

DRUG TARIFF 1979, AMENDMENT No. 5: EFFECTIVE 1 DECEMBER 1980

This Clinical Services Letter will be the only record most will have of the present changes to the Drug 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. Minor tranquillisers

At its last meeting the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee reviewed the period of supply restriction on minor tranquillisers after its first year of operation. The restriction will continue.

It is estimated that the number of tranquilliser prescriptions passed for payment dropped from 1.4 million in the year ending 31 March 1979 to 1.2 million in the year ending 31 March 1980. This represents a decrease of about 14 percent.

In the year ended 31 March 1980 the proportion of pharmaceutical benefits expenditure spent on tranquillisers decreased by approximately 20 percent when compared with the previous year.

2. Hypnotics

The present restriction on minor tranquillisers is to be extended from 1 December to also apply to hypnotics. This has the support of the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee.

The medicines affected are:

Amylobarbitone and amylobarbitone sodium (except injection).
Amylobarbitone sodium with quinalbarbitone sodium capsules.
Barbitone sodium.
Butobarbitone.
Chloral hydrate.

Chlormethiazole and its esters (except intravenous infusion).

Glutethimide.

Nitrazepam capsules and tablets.

Quinalbarbitone sodium.

Triazolam tablets, 0.125 mg and 0.25 mg.

This means that, on any one prescription form, payment will be made only for a maximum of 1 month's supply, inclusive of repeats. Payment will be made only for supplies obtained on a prescription.

Practitioners are reminded that barbiturate hypnotics and glutethimide are now required to be prescribed on a controlled drug prescription form.

3. To be available from a retail pharmacy

Additions—

Flunisolide nasal spray (Rhinalar).

Fusidic acid cream (Fucidin).

Imipramine hydrochloride long-acting capsules (Impril).

Indomethacin long-acting capsules (Indocid-R).

Ipecacuanha paediatric emetic draught, B.N.F.

Oestrogens, conjugated, equine (Premarin).

Tretinoin lotion and cream (Ainol).

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

Additions—

Flupenthixol decanoate injection (Depixol).

Loperamide hydrochloride capsules (Imodium).

Mianserin hydrochloride tablets (Tolvon).

Nitrofurazone urethral inserts (Furacin).

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

Additions—

Buprenorphine hydrochloride injection (Temgesic).

Calcitriol capsules (Rocaltrol).

Cefoxitin sodium injection (Mefoxin).

Primethamine with sulphadoxine tablets (Fansidar).

6. Not to be available on a practitioners supply order or a bulk supply order

Changed availability—

Ether, solvent, B.P.C.

Isopropyl alcohol.

7. To be available only on a wholesale supply order

Addition—

Mini-Gravigard intra-uterine contraceptive device.

8. To be available on the prescription, or practitioners supply order, of an appropriate specialist ("Retail Pharmacy-specialist prescription")

Changed availability—

Fluorouracil topical solution and topical cream.

9. Oxygen and nitrous oxide

The amount paid for oxygen and/or nitrous oxide, used when an anaesthetic is administered, is to be increased to \$2.50.

10. Dextrostix

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee had reason to reconsider the availability of Dextrostix under the Drug Tariff. It has recommended that no change be made at this stage. It has again stressed, however, that Dextrostix should be used only with a suitable colorimeter and that it is not necessarily suitable for all insulin-using diabetics. Its value is in the brittle diabetic, the pregnant woman, and those where control is difficult.

COST/EFFICACY REVIEW OF THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

From 1 December, Pro-Actidil tablets will carry a part-charge to the patient as a result of a further review of the antihistamines.

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee will be carrying out a further review of diuretics when it meets on 10 December. Any comments received before that date will be referred to the committee.

INTENSIFIED ADVERSE DRUG REACTION REPORTING SCHEME

The following medicines are included in the scheme:

Cimetidine (Tagamet).
Nifedipine (Adalat).
Perhexiline maleate (Pexid).
Sodium valproate (Epilim).
Sotalol hydrochloride (Sotacor).



(J. S. Phillips)
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