

## COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet

*a resource to support your patients with their stand-by medication*

### Information for Prescribers – South Devon and Torbay CCG

#### Background

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the second most common cause of emergency admission to hospital nationally, however, there is robust evidence that many admissions are avoidable.<sup>1</sup> Readmissions are also a significant problem in COPD; of all emergency readmissions to hospital COPD is the 5<sup>th</sup> most common cause nationally.<sup>1</sup>

The NICE guideline for COPD recommends: Patients at risk of having an exacerbation of COPD should be given a course of antibiotic and corticosteroid tablets to keep at home for use as part of a self-management strategy.<sup>2</sup> This reflects good evidence that prompt therapy in exacerbations results in less lung damage, faster recovery and fewer admissions (and subsequent readmissions) to hospital.<sup>1</sup>

Please note, it is acknowledged that not all patients will be eligible or appropriate for the provision of antibiotic and corticosteroid for self-treatment at home,<sup>3</sup> and in addition, NICE advises that the appropriate use of these medications should be monitored.<sup>2</sup>

We are referring to this stand-by supply of antibiotic and corticosteroid tablets for a COPD exacerbation as a COPD Rescue Pack.

It is recognised locally that stand-by medications for COPD are prescribed, however, how often is unable to be determined. In the national context, despite NICE guidance, the National Audit for COPD 2008 found that only one third of people with COPD admitted as an emergency during an exacerbation had been given standby drugs.<sup>4</sup>

#### COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet

There are many anecdotal reports that following supply of a COPD Rescue Pack, patients may later become confused as to what the medications were prescribed for and therefore take them inappropriately. It has also been reported having used their supply of rescue medications many patients later forget they need to obtain a further supply. To help support patients take these medications more effectively a “COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet” has been developed to accompany these prescriptions.

In line with our local guidelines the **first line** choice of **COPD Rescue Pack** antibiotic is amoxicillin.

*The COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet is available to support patients to use these medications effectively.*

**Amoxicillin 500mg capsules** COPD Rescue Pack antibiotic capsules, 1 capsule three times a day for 5 days. For COPD flare-up.

**Prednisolone 5mg tablets** COPD Rescue Pack steroid tablets, 6 immediately and then 6 in the morning for a total of 7 days. For COPD flare-up.

For patients intolerant to, or otherwise unable to have amoxicillin; the alternative is doxycycline.

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**Doxycycline 100mg capsules** COPD Rescue Pack antibiotic capsules, 1 twice a day for 5 days. For COPD flare-up.

**Prednisolone 5mg tablets** COPD Rescue Pack steroid tablets, 6 immediately and then 6 in the morning for a total of 7 days. For COPD flare-up.

**IMPORTANT:** *the COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflets are only relevant to prescriptions for standby supplies of antibiotics and corticosteroid prescribed as described here, this is due to the specific nature of information contained regarding these drugs and their doses.*

## Action for Prescribers

If appropriate, the “COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet” should be given to the patient by their prescriber with the prescription. This leaflet should stay together with the dispensed medications until they are required.

We have suggested community pharmacists separately bag the rescue pack medications and consider distinctly labelling this bag as “COPD Rescue Pack”, in addition to reminding the patient to keep the information leaflet with these medications until they are required. **To help community pharmacists identify rescue pack medications obvious directions on the prescription, e.g. as above, would be very helpful.**

The “COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet” is not to take the place of a COPD self-management plan. It is intended to further support the patient and to be used in conjunction with the patient’s self-management plan.

## Where can I obtain copies of the leaflet?

[The leaflet is available for download via South Devon and Torbay CCG link to follow](#)

## References

1. Department of Health. An Outcomes Strategy for COPD and Asthma: NHS Companion Document. May 2012, Department of Health
2. NICE. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: Management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in adults in primary and secondary care. NICE, 2010
3. NICE. Quality Standard for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. July 2011
4. Royal College of Physicians. The National COPD Audit 2008. Royal College of Physicians, London
5. COPD Rescue Pack Information Leaflet v1.0, April 2012. Plymouth Area Joint Formulary <http://bit.ly/PAJFcopd>