

Priadel Update: 6/10/2020

Summary:

Current plans to switch patients from Priadel® to an alternative brand of lithium carbonate tablets are PAUSED.

We have been notified today (6/10/20) that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) have begun a formal investigation into the activities of Essential Pharma and their earlier decision to withdraw Priadel® tablets from the UK market.

Essential Pharma have now withdrawn their earlier notice to remove Priadel® tablets from the UK Market and will continue to make Priadel® tablets available for the UK whilst they re-start negotiations on price with DHSC. In practice this means that Priadel® tablets will continue to be available and Essential Pharma would need to give DHSC at least 6 months' notice of their intention, if they subsequently decide to withdraw any of their products from the UK market. It is also important to note that the CMA also has the power to impose temporary measures on anyone under investigation. This would mean that if these were imposed then a company could not make any changes until the outcome of the CMA investigation is completed and that process could take several years to complete.

In the light of this announcement, that Priadel® tablets will NOT be withdrawn from the UK market by March 2021, there is no longer a need to immediately progress any Derbyshire-wide switching of patients from Priadel® tablets to an alternative brand of lithium carbonate and patients who require this medicine should continue to be managed in line with usual clinical practice underpinned by (e.g.) NICE guidance CG185 (<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg185>).

I am sure you will understand that we are not privy to the nature of negotiations about price and availability of medicines as by their nature commercial and in confidence, but we will let you know as and when any information becomes available and what the practical implications of this are.

Any planned virtual events to support understanding of the switching process will be delivered in the coming days to ensure we are as prepared as possible in the case that switching needs to be reactivated in the future and to advance the well-received networking between primary care, community pharmacy and mental health services that has been a positive outcome from this scenario.

The Derbyshire Joint Area Prescribing Committee (JAPC) advice under the current circumstances, **no switching should take place in primary care.**

- Patients, who have been switched over to an alternative Lithium Brand and are stable, should remain on their current treatment.
- Patients who have been switched over to an alternative Lithium Brand, but are unstable; prescribers should attempt to switch back to Priadel.

For further information about the CMA investigation please use the following link: https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/investigation-into-supply-of-lithium-based-medication-for-the-treatment-of-bipolar-disease?utm_source=624bb2d2-40ae-4db9-a032-36e2b76aef8e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Sent on behalf of:

- Steve Hulme, Director of Medicines Management & Clinical Policies, NHS Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Steve Jones, Chief Pharmacist, Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust