

Changes to the arrangements for distribution of BNFC in England

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) distributes the BNFC to NHS organisations in England only. To ensure that all appropriate professionals in England receive a copy of BNFC, they are being addressed to individuals.

If you work for the NHS in England and think you are entitled to a copy of the BNFC but have not received one, or have a query regarding mailed BNFCs, contact the DH Publications Orderline. Tel: 0300 123 1002.

Electronic access to the BNF and BNFC

BNF and BNFC are available free in the UK and developing countries from the publishers at <http://bnf.org> and <http://bnfc.org>. Both the BNF and BNFC are also available online at www.evidence.nhs.uk and access is free and open to anyone.

Alternatively, copies may be obtained through any bookseller or direct from Macmillan Distribution by telephone: +44 (0) 1256 302 699 or by email: direct@macmillan.co.uk. For all bulk orders of more than 20 copies please email the publisher at: pharmpress@rpharms.com or telephone: +44 (0) 20 7572 2266. Print copies of the BNF and BNFC are also available via a 1 or 2 year subscription; please email php@macmillansolutions.com or telephone: +44 (0) 203 318 3141.

Pharmaid

Numerous requests have been received from developing countries for BNFCs. The Pharmaid scheme of the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association will dispatch old BNFCs to Commonwealth countries. BNFCs will be collected from certain community pharmacies in November. For further details check the health press or contact:

Betty Falconbridge
Tel: 020 7572 2216
Email: admin@commonwealthpharmacy.org

Feedback

We welcome feedback from you. If you have any comments or suggestions please let us know at bnfc@bnf.org. The contact email for manufacturers or pharmaceutical companies wishing to contact the BNF is manufacturerinfo@bnf.org.

Dear BNFC user

Welcome to *BNF for Children* 2011–2012. The flow of text in BNFC has changed to a predominantly two-column layout, similar to the BNF, allowing an easier transition between the two publications. We have highlighted below some of the key changes you will find in this new edition of BNFC.

Updated prescribing information

Controlled Drug symbols

Preparations of Controlled Drugs in Schedules 2, 3, 4 (Part I), and 4 (Part II) of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (and subsequent amendments) are now identified throughout BNFC 2011–2012 using symbols to indicate the Schedule to which they belong. A key to the new symbols can be found in the Prescribing for Controlled Drugs section in General Guidance (p. 9).

Antiepileptic medication in pregnancy

Guidance on the use of antiepileptic medication in pregnancy has been reviewed and updated in section 4.8.1 (p. 216). All young women with epilepsy who become pregnant, or want to become pregnant, should be referred to a specialist. It is important that young women taking anticonvulsants at the time of becoming pregnant should not discontinue their medication without specialist advice; the risk of harm to the mother and unborn child from seizures outweighs any teratogenic risk.

The concentration of antiepileptic medication in the blood may change during pregnancy, necessitating plasma-drug concentration monitoring; this is especially a concern for phenytoin, lamotrigine, and carbamazepine.

Treatment of meningitis

Guidance on the pre-hospital management of bacterial meningitis (Table 1, section 5.1, p. 248) has been updated to take into account the recommendations of the NICE guideline: *Bacterial Meningitis and Meningococcal Septicaemia* (June 2010). In hospital, consideration should be given to the addition of vancomycin to initial, empirical antibacterial therapy if the child has received prolonged or multiple use of other antibacterials in the last 3 months, or if the child has travelled, in the last 3 months, to areas outside the UK with highly penicillin- and cephalosporin-resistant pneumococci.

HIV infection

Guidance on the treatment of HIV infection has been updated in BNFC (section 5.3.1, p. 310) to take into account recommendations from the Paediatric European Network for Treatment of AIDS (PENTA) and the Children's HIV Association (CHIVA). Doses for various antiretrovirals have been introduced in BNFC.

Drug interactions with hormonal contraceptives

Advice on the interactions of combined hormonal contraceptives and progestogen-only contraceptives has been updated in section 7.3.1 (p. 398) and 7.3.2 (p. 403) to take into account the recommendations of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Clinical Guidance: *Drug Interactions with Hormonal Contraception* (January 2011):

- Current recommendations are that additional contraceptive precautions are no longer necessary when *antibacterials that do not induce liver enzymes* are taken with *combined* oral contraceptives, unless diarrhoea or vomiting occurs. No additional contraceptive precautions are required when contraceptive patches or vaginal rings are used with antibacterials that do not induce liver enzymes.
- Advice on the interactions of combined hormonal contraceptives (section 7.3.1, p. 398) and progestogen-only contraceptives (section 7.3.2, p. 403) with *liver enzyme-inducing drugs* has also been updated.

Nocturnal Enuresis

Advice on the management of nocturnal enuresis has been updated in section 7.4.2 (p. 411) to take into account the recommendations of the NICE guideline: *Nocturnal Enuresis, The Management of Bedwetting in Children and Young People* (October 2010). Treatment of nocturnal enuresis may now be considered in children over the age of 5 years. If initial dietary and behavioural advice is not successful, an enuresis alarm should be first line treatment; if unsuccessful, drug therapy with desmopressin may be considered. If the child has not responded to other treatments, the tricyclic antidepressant imipramine may be considered.

Cautionary and Advisory Labels

A revised set of cautionary and advisory labels have been introduced into BNFC 2011-2012. All of the existing labels were user-tested, and revised wording was selected to reflect terminology that is better understood by patients; the revised labels were then published in BNF 61 (March 2011). In response to feedback from users on the labels published in BNF 61, labels 4 and 25 have been further revised, and the changes are reflected in BNFC 2011-2012. Pharmacists should consult Appendix 3 (BNFC) or Appendix 9 (BNF) for further information on the labelling of dispensed medicines. Pharmacy labelling systems should be updated. We would be grateful to receive any constructive comments on the labelling suggested for any preparation.

New safety information

Noradrenaline/Norepinephrine base

Manufacturers are now required to express the strength of all noradrenaline preparations as noradrenaline base. While this is being implemented, for a

period of time preparations on the UK market may be described as *either* noradrenaline base or noradrenaline acid tartrate. Doses in BNFC continue to be expressed as noradrenaline base (p. 113).

Reorganised sections in BNFC 2011-2012

New look for table summarising antibacterial therapy

Table 1 (section 5.1, p. 244), which provides a summary of antibacterial therapy for infections, has been reformatted in BNFC 2011-2012, making it easier to identify first-line antibacterial treatments, suggested durations of treatment, the alternatives to these treatments and, where appropriate, the circumstances under which the alternatives should be prescribed.

How to use BNFC

Teaching sessions on *Getting the Best Out of Your BNFC* have revealed that healthcare professionals (from the recently qualified to those who have been practising for many years) and students training to join these professions have much to learn about BNFC. The section on *How to Use BNFC* has been expanded in this edition (p. xi); it is now linked to the main elements of rational prescribing, such as, using BNFC to select drugs that minimise harm in children with co-morbidities, and writing prescriptions in a way that helps to reduce medication errors. The generic structure of this section means that it can be adapted easily for teaching and learning in different clinical settings.

BNF and BNFC e-newsletter

The BNF and BNFC free e-newsletter is issued several times a year. To register for regular updates, case studies, and tips on using these publications effectively, please sign up at <http://bnf.org/newsletter>. To visit the e-newsletter archive, go to <http://bnfc.org/bnfc/bnfcextra/current/450066.htm>.

Distribution of BNFCs

The UK health departments distribute BNFCs to NHS hospitals, doctors, and community pharmacies.

In Scotland, contact by email: nss.psd-bnf@nhs.net

In Wales, contact the Business Services Centre. Tel: 01495 332 000

In Northern Ireland, contact by email: ni.bnf@hscni.net