



Position Statement on prescribing Prednisolone for patients requiring soluble tablets / liquid formulation

HVCCG recommendations:

1st Line: Prednisolone standard (plain) 1mg and/or 5mg tablets dispersed in water

2nd Line: Prednisolone 5mg soluble tablets

Recommendations

- For new and existing patients prednisolone standard (plain) tablets should be considered as first line option. The plain tablets can be crushed and dispersed in water. This is an unlicensed use of the product but is low cost
- For patients or where carers are unable to crush and disperse plain tablets, soluble tablets should be offered.
- In clinical situations where it is inappropriate to disperse/ crush the plain tablets soluble tablets should be used for example
 - in patients with fine-bore enteral feeding tubes
 - where a dose such as 2.7mg is required use soluble tablets as plain tablets do not completely dissolve into a uniform distribution.
- Prednisolone 5mg/5ml oral solution unit dose should be switched, respectively, to either the plain prednisolone tablets dispersed in water [unlicensed use – Low cost] or prednisolone soluble tablets [licensed product – High cost]
- When considering a switch exclude patients with hypersensitivity to any of the excipients in prednisolone soluble tablets and prednisolone plain tablets - For excipients see SPC <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>
- When considering a switch exclude patients that have had intolerance to the prednisolone soluble tablets and prednisolone plain tablets.

Rationale

Prednisolone plain tablets

- Prednisolone 5mg soluble tablets currently cost over 42 as much as the plain 5mg tablets in primary care¹ (£0.72 per soluble tablet compared to £0.017 per plain tablet).
- Plain prednisolone tablets are available in 1mg and 5mg strengths are relatively small tablets and do not present a problem in swallowing for the majority of patients.
- The plain tablets disperse easily in water to form a suspension with some dispersing almost immediately and others taking two to five minutes². [Note that this would mean using a licensed product outside the terms of that license – unlicensed use.]
- The plain tablet can also be crushed and mixed with a small amount of soft food such as yoghurt, honey or jam³. [Note this is unlicensed use of the product.]
- As crushing or dispersing plain tablets in water before administration is unlicensed use, it is important that this is done with patient consent and written instructions on administering these tablets are included in the prescription. For example written instructions – “Disperse *FOUR 5mg* tablets (*20mg*) in a glass of water *once a day in the morning for five days*. Drink all the resulting solution immediately”

- There are a variety of strengths available of the plain tablets, which allows the prescriber to make small changes to the dose (for example dose of 7mg) without the patient having to change the method of administration or to take additional measurements to get the required dose.

Prednisolone 5mg soluble tablets

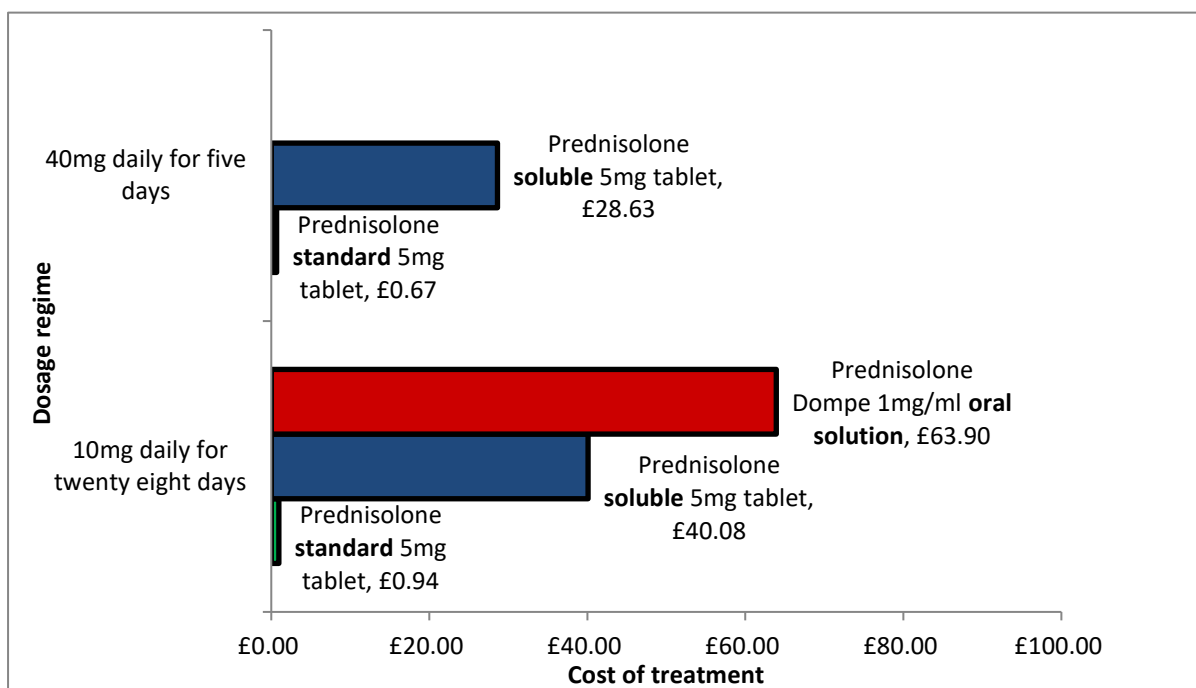
- Prednisolone 5mg soluble tablets (£0.72 per tablet) is a licensed formulation and **cheaper** than the Prednisolone 5mg/5ml oral solution unit dose (£1.14 per dose) but more expensive than the Prednisolone plain tablets (£0.017 per tablet).

Cost

- Herts Valleys CCG currently spend about £24,500 per annum on Prednisolone 5mg/5ml oral solution unit dose and could save
 - **£23,500** per annum by prescribing plain prednisolone tablets and crushing or dissolving in water rather than Prednisolone 5mg/5ml oral solution unit dose [Note this would be unlicensed use]
 - **£8,800** per annum by prescribing soluble prednisolone tablets rather than Prednisolone 5mg/5ml oral solution unit dose

Costs based on e-PACT data from October to December 2017 and drug tariff at April 2018

The bar chart below shows the cost of the different prednisolone formulations with different dosage regimes



Bar chart prepared April 2018. Prices checked in the Drug tariff, April 2018.

References

- 1 Drug tariff April 2018. Available at: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2018-03/Drug%20Tariff%20April%202018.pdf>
- 2 The NEWT Guidelines – Prednisolone. February 2016. Available at <http://access.newtguidelines.com/P/Prednisolone.html>. (accessed 24/04/18 - Needs password)
- 3 Recommendations for the prescribing of soluble prednisolone or prednisolone in liquid form, East Kent Prescribing Group. July 2015. Available at [Recommendations for the prescribing of soluble prednisolone](#) (accessed 02/05/17)

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