

## Do you know...



### ...how to confirm whether a product can be prescribed at NHS expense?

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine whether an item can be prescribed on an NHS prescription. This two-part guide (continued from last month) is designed to help pharmacies with this process.

#### PART 2 – Medicines, Foods, Toiletries and Cosmetics

Subject to the prescriber having the appropriate prescribing rights, any medicine, food, toiletry or cosmetic may be prescribed on an NHS prescription unless the product is listed in Part XVIII A of the Drug Tariff (commonly known as 'the blacklist') or the criteria set out in the Tariff for prescribing products listed in Part XVIII B of the Drug Tariff (the 'selected list') is not met.

#### The Blacklist

The 'Blacklist' can be found in Schedule 1 to the NHS (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004 which is reproduced in Part XVIII A of the Drug Tariff. This is the list of medicines and other substances which cannot be prescribed on NHS prescriptions. Any medicine, food, toiletry or cosmetic not in the 'Blacklist' can be prescribed on an NHS prescription.

As a general rule, if a proprietary (branded) product is listed in the 'Blacklist', it cannot be prescribed on the NHS. The only exception to this is:

*If the prescription has been written generically and the generic product is not blacklisted AND if the generic name has an 'Official Title', that is, the drug appears as the head of a monograph in the European Pharmacopoeia (EP), the British Pharmacopoeia (BP), the British National Formulary (BNF), the International Pharmacopoeia, the Dental Practitioners' Formulary or is included in the Cumulative List of Recommended International Non-proprietary Names.*

*In cases where a blacklisted proprietary product contains more than one ingredient, the combination product must have an official title.*

For example, Benerva Tablets 100mg appears in the blacklist. The product's generic name, Thiamine has a Recommended International Non-proprietary Name (RINN) and is not blacklisted, therefore Benerva could be dispensed if the prescription was written generically (payment would be based on the Part VIII price).

Paramol tablets appear in the blacklist. The ingredients, Paracetamol 500mg and Dihydrocodeine 7.46mg do not have an official title (with this particular ratio of ingredients) so Paramol tablets cannot be prescribed on an NHS prescription.

When a prescription for a blacklisted product is received, pharmacy staff have a number of options open to them:

- the prescription could be returned to the prescriber so that an alternative product can be prescribed; OR
- a private prescription could be issued; OR
- if the item has GSL or P status, the product could be sold to the patient over the counter instead.

The blacklist has rarely changed since it was first introduced over 25 years ago and as a consequence of not being routinely maintained, the list can be complex and confusing to interpret. PSNC's view is that it is time for the arrangements to be reviewed.

#### The Selected List

The 'Selected List' can be found in Schedule 2 to the NHS (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004 which is reproduced in Part XVIII B of the Drug Tariff. The items included on the list may only be prescribed for the patient groups and for the purpose listed in the Tariff. For example, 'Niferex Elixir 30ml Paediatric Dropper Bottle' can only be prescribed to infants born prematurely for prophylaxis in the treatment of iron deficiency.

Prescribers must endorse prescriptions for these products 'SLS'. If the 'SLS' endorsement is missing, the prescription should not be dispensed and will not be passed for payment by NHS Prescription Services. Pharmacy staff cannot make the SLS endorsement themselves.

#### Helpful Hints:

- There are different arrangements for medical devices. A medical device can only be prescribed if it is listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff. Recently, a number of products have been introduced to the market which at first glance appear to be medicinal products or cosmetics but have been registered by the manufacturer as medical devices. If you are unfamiliar with the product, it is always worth checking the packaging for a CE mark which would confirm that it is a medical device.
- If the product is listed in the borderline substances list (Part XV) and the prescriber has endorsed the prescription, 'ACBS', this means that the prescriber has issued the prescription in accordance with the advice of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS). If the ACBS endorsement is missing for a product on the borderline substances list, pharmacy contractors can still dispense the prescription and it will be passed for payment by NHS Prescription Services. However the prescriber may be asked by their PCT to justify why the product has been dispensed at NHS expense.
- Whilst an item might technically be prescribable on the NHS and the pharmacy will be reimbursed, the PCT may have issued local prescribing guidance on the appropriateness of prescribing the product. For example some PCTs have issued guidance to doctors that private prescriptions should be used to request medicines for malarial prophylaxis.
- A helpful resource to confirm whether a product could be prescribed on an NHS Prescription is the dictionary of medicines and devices. Guidance on using the dictionary to confirm a product's prescribing status and links to online viewers can be found online at [www.psn.org.uk/dmd](http://www.psn.org.uk/dmd)

*For support on whether a particular product is allowed on an NHS prescription, the PSNC Information team will be happy to help (01296 432823 or email [info@psnc.org.uk](mailto:info@psnc.org.uk)).*



For any pharmacist involved in Community Pharmacy, understanding aspects of the Pharmacy Contract will be relevant CPD.

Why not make a record in your GPhC CPD Plan & Record file or on-line at [www.uptodate.org.uk](http://www.uptodate.org.uk)