



Dear Colleagues

SEASONAL INFLUENZA: PRESCRIBING OF ANTIVIRALS 2023-24

This communication follows SGHD/CMO/21(2023), which issued on 19 December 2023 advising that antiviral medicines (specifically oseltamivir and zanamivir) could be prescribed to treat influenza where clinically indicated, and in particular, among those vulnerable to severe disease or presenting with severe infection / symptoms.

The Seasonal Flu Vaccination programme came to a close on 31 March 2024. In addition to this, Public Health Scotland confirm that the circulation of flu virus in the community has remained at baseline levels for some time. Further information is available [here](#).

Therefore, this letter is to advise that the routine prescribing of antivirals for influenza by GPs in the community should now cease.

This means:

- GPs and other prescribers working in primary care should not prescribe antivirals for the prevention or treatment of influenza on a GP10 prescription form; and
- Community pharmacists should not supply antiviral medicines in primary care on presentation of a GP10 prescription form.

This advice does not impact on prescribing of antivirals in hospitals or as advised by NHS Public Health Department health protection teams for the management of incidents / outbreaks of influenza.

We would be grateful if you could cascade this letter for immediate action as appropriate.

We thank you for your continued support.

From Chief Medical Officer
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Professor Sir Gregor Smith
Professor Alison Strath

29 April 2024
SGHD/CMO(2024)5

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Medical Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health, NHS Boards
Directors of Nursing & Midwifery, NHS Boards
Directors of Pharmacy
General Practitioners
Practice Managers
Practice Nurses
Health Visitors
Immunisation Coordinators
CPHMs
Scottish Prison Service
Scottish Ambulance Service
Consultant Obstetricians
Occupational Health Lead

For information

Chairs, NHS Boards
Infectious Disease Consultants
Consultant Paediatricians
Consultant Physicians
Anaesthetists and ITU
Public Health Scotland
Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland
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Further Enquiries

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Yours sincerely,

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