

Prescribing advice for Methotrexate

The Trust pharmacists have noted that an increasing number of dermatology and rheumatology patients are admitted to hospital on 10mg tablets of methotrexate which have been dispensed in the community. Locally, guidance for several years has been to prescribe methotrexate in multiples of 2.5mg only, and this measure was taken for safety reasons following a National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) alert. It was considered that prescribing one strength of methotrexate to patients would avoid confusion and formed part of the good practice guidance in the NPSA alert, and the Trust follows this guidance.

May we therefore advise GPs that the Trust only stocks and supplies the 2.5mg strength tablets. Patients who have previously requested 10mg tablets and who receive methotrexate in 2.5mg tablets from the Trust will be counselled by pharmacy staff to alert them to the fact that they have been supplied with a different strength tablet.

In addition, each patient should have a small (A6 size) information and record book (amber cover) where all blood tests and doses are recorded. Prescribers and dispensers are asked to ensure that blood tests have been done and the results recorded before new supplies are made. All the documentation can be found on the NPSA website at <http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/?entryid45=59800>

Please contact the Trust pharmacists on (01952) 641222 ext 4365 if you have any queries, or would like to discuss this further.