



# COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert

CEM/CMO/2021/005

12 February 2021

## Colchicine in the Management of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Positive Patients – Trial Use Only

### Recommendation

It is recommended that:

**Colchicine should not be used in the management of COVID-19 positive patients other than in the context of a trial, or unless there is an additional licensed indication for its use.**

### Supporting Evidence

A [pre-print of the Canadian COLCORONA trial](#) has now been published. In this primary care based study of 4,488 patients, 4.7% of patients in the colchicine group reached the composite primary endpoint of death or hospitalisation versus 5.8% of those in the placebo group. The publication also suggests that colchicine may reduce hospitalisation rates for patients in the early stage of COVID-19 infection (4.5% in the colchicine group vs 5.7% placebo). However, these findings were not statistically significant and full peer-reviewed findings from the trial are currently awaited.

There are currently very limited published results from other clinical trials on the effectiveness of colchicine in treating COVID-19 patients in primary or secondary care. Although the data from the COLCORONA trial is potentially promising, further evaluation of study data in both primary and secondary care (including from the RECOVERY trial) is needed before it can be determined whether colchicine is a safe and effective routine treatment for COVID-19.

### Action

**NHS acute trusts / health boards / hospitals** are asked to:

Ensure front line medical, nursing clinical and pharmacy teams are aware of the UK-wide recommendation that colchicine should NOT be used routinely in the management of COVID-19. Teams are encouraged to continue to consider recruitment to the RECOVERY trial, which is studying colchicine in hospitalised patients.

**General practices and CCG Chief Pharmacists or equivalent** are asked to:

Ensure that the local primary care team is aware that colchicine should NOT be used in the management of COVID-19 within primary care, other than in the context of a trial. Use in licensed indications remains unaffected. Subject to regulatory approval, agreement has been reached to add colchicine to the [PRINCIPLE trial](#). Practices are encouraged to continue to support recruitment to this important UK platform trial, which is evaluating potential COVID therapies in primary care.

## Product Details

Colchicine is licensed in the treatment of acute gout, and as short-term prophylaxis during initial therapy with allopurinol and uricosuric drugs. Colchicine is also indicated in Familial Mediterranean Fever for prophylaxis of attacks and prevention of amyloidosis (paediatric population). Product characteristics can be found [here](#).

## Distribution

General Practice  
Community Pharmacies  
ICS /STP and Clinical Commissioning Group Pharmacy Leads  
NHS Trusts (NHS boards in Scotland and Wales)  
Regional Medical Directors  
Regional Chief Pharmacists  
Lead/Senior Pharmacists and Regional Procurement Pharmacy Leads  
Trust/Hospital Medical Directors and Chief Pharmacists to circulate to medical, pharmacy and nursing staff managing COVID-19 patients

## Enquiries

### England

Enquiries from general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to the local clinical commissioning group.

Enquiries from NHS trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to the trust pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Chief Pharmacist and national teams if required.

Further information can also be requested from the dedicated email address:  
[england.spoc-c19therapeutics@nhs.net](mailto:england.spoc-c19therapeutics@nhs.net).

### Northern Ireland

Enquiries from general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to your local HSCB office.

Enquiries from hospitals in Northern Ireland should in the first instance be directed to your hospital pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service or Pharmaceutical Directorate at the Department of Health if required. Further information can be obtained by contacting  
[RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**Scotland**

Enquiries from Scotland should in the first instance be directed to the Health Board Director of Pharmacy who will escalate issues to either NHS National Procurement or the Scottish Government's Medicines Policy Team if required. Contact should be made using the following emails: [nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot) or [medicines.policy@gov.scot](mailto:medicines.policy@gov.scot)

**Wales**

Enquiries in Wales should in the first instance be directed to the health board's Chief Pharmacist who will escalate issues to the Pharmacy and Prescribing Team at Welsh Government if required. Enquiries to the Welsh Government should be directed to: [COVID-19.Pharmacy.Prescribing@gov.wales](mailto:COVID-19.Pharmacy.Prescribing@gov.wales).