

Public Health Link

From the Chief Medical Officer for Wales

Distribution: As Appendix 1

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Date: 31 January 2022

Reference: CEM/CMO/2022/06

Category: Immediate (cascade within 24 hours)

This alert updates and replaces the previous alert CEM/CMO/2021/027 issued on 30 June 2021

Title: COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert - Palivizumab passive immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in at risk pre-term infants.

Dear colleagues,

Palivizumab is a humanised monoclonal antibody. It offers a form of passive immunisation, effectively providing short-term protection against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

Palivizumab is currently part of the UK-wide immunisation schedule under the guidance of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI recommends monthly administration of up to five intramuscular doses of palivizumab (at a dose of 15mg/kg) over the RSV season¹ to at-risk groups predisposed to complications from RSV infection. The at-risk groups include infants with severe chronic lung disease, congenital heart disease, multiple congenital anomalies, or children with certain immunodeficiencies.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in response to the atypical seasonal presentation of RSV, a UK-wide rapid policy statement (RPS) on palivizumab immunisation against RSV was updated on 29 June 2021 and is attached to this alert. This extended eligibility to an additional cohort of at-risk infants and allowed up to seven monthly doses.

A National Expert Group comprising relevant specialist clinicians, national clinical leads, the devolved administrations, JCVI, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has reviewed the latest available data, noting a decline in RSV related hospitalisation and rates of infection, which are now below the seasonal norm. The unanimous recommendation of the National Expert Group is that provision of palivizumab passive immunisation to the existing and additional cohorts should be stopped at the end of January 2022.

ACTION

NHS Health Boards, Trusts, ambulance service providers and primary care teams are asked to note:

Provision of palivizumab passive immunisation to at risk pre-term infants within the cohorts recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the additional cohorts recommended under the previously published UK clinical policy statement (see CEM/CMO/2021/027) should be stopped at the end of January 2022.

Yours sincerely



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