Prescribing Tip No. 108  Date: 14th January 2016

Steroid Treatment Cards – A Reminder

Who should receive a steroid treatment card?

- All patients prescribed **systemic corticosteroids for periods of more than three weeks** should receive a steroid treatment card at the outset of treatment.

- For patients on systemic corticosteroids for three weeks or less, or those receiving more than four short oral courses per year, a card may be issued at the discretion of the doctor or pharmacist. For patients prescribed topical or nasal corticosteroids a steroid treatment card would only be issued if considered necessary by the prescribing doctor.

- Patients who require **prolonged high dose inhaled steroids** are at risk of systemic side effects and should be issued with a steroid treatment card, as should patients using 'off-label' high doses of inhaled steroids, maximal licensed doses of inhaled steroids when used in conjunction with other steroids (such as oral steroids) and use of inhaled steroids with concomitant medicines that inhibit their metabolism (cytochrome P450 inhibiting drugs: e.g. HIV protease inhibitors).


Who should issue the steroid treatment card?

- It is the responsibility of the prescriber to issue a steroid treatment card if appropriate, and to discuss its purpose with the patient. The prescriber should ensure that the information on the card is kept up to date. The doctor should explain the instructions on the steroid treatment card when issuing one to the patient.

- Pharmacists dispensing systemic corticosteroids or high dose inhaled steroids should check that the patient has been given a steroid treatment card and, if not, issue one if they consider it appropriate. They should inform the prescribing doctor that they have done so.

How do practices order steroid treatment cards?

- Practices can obtain a supply of steroid treatment cards through the portal at [www.nw.lasca.nhs.uk/orders](http://www.nw.lasca.nhs.uk/orders)

References

1. Health Service Circular HSC 1998/056 (Revised National Steroid Treatment Card)

With thanks to the Medicines Management team at South Sefton CCG and Southport and Formby CCG

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302