

Position Statement: Vitamin D in care homes

Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB does not support prescribing 10 micrograms/400 international units vitamin D for care home residents

Recommendations

- The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) both advise that care home providers are expected to support people's full nutritional needs, which includes supplementation with vitamin D throughout the year as recommended by Public Health England.
- Care Homes are required to purchase and provide suitable vitamin D supplements (these may include tablets, liquids, or oral sprays) for residents.
- Any requests to GP practices to prescribe 10 micrograms/400 international units of vitamin D supplements for care home residents should be declined and care homes should be directed to purchase products themselves.

Rationale

[Regulation 14](#) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 requires that for care home residents 'the nutritional and hydration needs of service users must be met'.

In 2016 [Public Health England](#) stated that population groups at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency (such as people who are confined indoors, including those in care homes) should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms/400 international units throughout the year.

NHS England's guidance [Conditions for which over the counter items should not be routinely prescribed in primary care](#) emphasises that vitamins and minerals should **not** be prescribed for maintenance or preventative treatment. Vitamin D supplements are also included in CQC's [Over the counter and homely remedies guidance](#).

[The Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#) specify that '*care home providers are required to meet resident's full nutritional needs to sustain life and good health, and reduce the risks of malnutrition, in line with regulation 14 (Part A) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. In addition to provision of nutritious meals, this includes food supplements where necessary, such as vitamin D*'.

Guidance for care homes

10 micrograms/400 international units vitamin D supplements will no longer be prescribed. The care home/organisation will need to establish how they will now meet their residents' vitamin D requirements.

Suitable supplements:

- Are widely available to purchase in supermarkets, pharmacies and online at a low cost
- Are available as:
 - Tablets – available from <£0.02 per person, per day (1 tablet)
 - Drops* – available from <£0.01 per person, per day (1 drop)
 - Sprays* – available from <£0.05 per person, per day (1 spray)

*The most cost effective 10 micrograms /400 international units may be labelled as junior/ infant products but are still suitable for adults.

Some manufacturers may offer bulk buy discounts, so actual cost of provision may be less than the retail costs quoted above.

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