

To:
All GP Practices
All Community Pharmacies

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15th May 2019

Dear Colleague

LOESTRIN[®] TABLETS SUPPLY ISSUE

HSCB has been informed that Loestrin[®] 20 is currently out of stock and Galen Ltd also anticipates that Loestrin[®] 30 will be out of stock in wholesalers from early June 2019. These products will be out-of-stock for the foreseeable future, with no anticipated resupply date as Galen Ltd works to re-establish supply.

Loestrin[®] is a combined oral contraception (COC):

- Loestrin[®] 20 is a **monophasic low-strength COC** containing Ethinylestradiol 0.02mg and Norethisterone 1mg.
- Loestrin[®] 30 is a **monophasic standard-strength COC** containing Ethinylestradiol 0.03mg and Norethisterone 1.5mg

Alternative agents and management options

Alternative, equivalent products are not available so a patient's contraception should be reviewed. It is important to involve patients in the discussion regarding any planned change to their COC before making the change.

1. **Loestrin[®] 20:** if a low-strength COC is clinically appropriate, consider switching patient to an alternative monophasic low-strength COC in line with NI formulary choices available at:

<http://niformulary.hscni.net/Formulary/Adult/Pages/default.aspx>

2. **Loestrin[®] 30**: if a standard-strength COC is clinically appropriate, consider switching patient to an alternative monophasic standard-strength COC in line with NI formulary choices available at:

<http://niformulary.hscni.net/Formulary/Adult/Pages/default.aspx>

Please note; if the patient's previous COC was used correctly, or pregnancy can reasonably be excluded, patients should be advised to start the first active pill of the new brand COC the day after the last active pill of the old brand, without the 7-day pill free interval. If a patient decides to take the 7-day pill free interval before commencing the new COC, assess the need for additional contraception.

Further information on COCs is available at:

- The Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare's Guideline "Combined Hormonal Contraception"
<https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/documents/combined-hormonal-contraception/>
- NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/contraception-combined-hormonal-methods>

If you have any query about the supply of Loestrin[®] 20 / Loestrin[®] 30, please contact your local HSCB Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely,



Joe Brogan
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Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management