

Nurse Update

December 2009

Welcome to the [National Prescribing Service Limited](#) (NPS) *Nurse Update*.

Nurse Update is a digest of evidence based information to help you improve your knowledge of medicines use and prescribing practices.

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NPS actively engages with nurses to encourage a greater understanding of medicines by providing information and activities on various therapeutic programs.

1) Managing urinary incontinence in primary care

This latest therapeutic program assists health professionals to identify and manage patients who maybe at risk of incontinence.

Health professionals are encouraged to:

- ask about incontinence assess the causes of incontinence, considering possible drug-related incontinence
- distinguish between the types of incontinence to ensure appropriate treatment
- consider non-drug therapies (including physiotherapy and incontinence clinics) in conjunction with drug therapy, where appropriate

Health professionals are encouraged to routinely ask about a history of incontinence in women who are at a greater risk. Included are women who have had a recent childbirth, are overweight or have chronic conditions.

Certain medicines may cause incontinence. Determining the cause of incontinence is important because treatment options vary depending on the type of incontinence. A bladder diary is a useful tool in the initial bladder assessment and treatment evaluation.

Find out more about [therapeutic information](#) and clinical activities to improve your practice.

2) Managing anxiety disorders

Anxiety symptoms may be primary or secondary to other physical or psychiatric disorders. To accurately diagnose anxiety disorders, health professionals need to characterise all anxiety symptoms against criteria.

To help accurately diagnose and treat anxiety, this therapeutic program encourages health professionals to:

- Use key symptoms to differentiate between types of anxiety disorders and determine effective treatment
- Trial non-drug therapy including psychological therapy as first line
- Consider an antidepressant for those who do not respond adequately to psychological therapies, selecting on the basis of evidence of efficacy in the diagnosed anxiety disorder
- Reserve benzodiazepines for short-term use in selected circumstances

Psychological therapies should be the first treatment choice in most anxiety disorders to control symptoms and improve function. This includes cognitive behavioural therapy and other non-drug strategies.

Find out more about [therapeutic information](#) and clinical activities to improve your practice.

3) Therapeutic choices for menopausal symptoms

Menopause is a fact of life for most women but many are unsure which treatment options are safe and often don't feel confident discussing options with their health professional.

In order to make an informed decision, women need to be given personalised information about different treatment options based on their own medical history.

This therapeutic program reinforces the following for health professionals:

- Discuss a woman's goals and concerns about menopause and her treatment preferences
- Oestrogen with or without progestogen is the most effective treatment for women with menopausal symptoms
- Consider potential benefits and harms and assess cardiovascular risk
- Tailor the dose and duration of therapy according to individual symptoms and existing risks
- Inform women about the limited efficacy and safety data on complementary and alternative medicines

Find out more about [therapeutic information](#) and clinical activities to improve your practice.

4) Quality Use of Medicines for Nurse Practitioners

Charles Darwin University and NPS have collaborated to produce a series of online case-based modules for Nurse Practitioners.

The [Quality Use of Medicines for Nurse Practitioners website](#) has been designed for the ongoing professional development of Nurse Practitioners. For access to case studies and resources [register now](#).

5) Feed your competency

Case study

Complete a case study to help refine your clinical decision-making skills. You can download the latest [case study](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/healthpro.

Practice nurses

Remember you can participate in educational visits and facilitated small group case discussions. Just contact the NPS Facilitator at your local Division of General Practice.

Residential aged care nurses

Visit the medication management website at <http://agedcare.nps.org.au/home> for useful resources and tools.

6) Community Partners program

As part of the Community Partners program, Arthritis NSW, in partnership with NPS, have developed two resources to help consumers manage their pain.

[Helping you manage your pain](#) is a 16 page booklet designed to help people manage their arthritis pain, in consultation with their GP and other healthcare professionals.

[Arthritis pain](#) is a brochure developed in traditional Chinese to help people discuss arthritis pain with their doctor and other healthcare professionals, and prepare a plan to better manage their pain.

7) Diabetes, medicines and me – a guide for people living with type 2 diabetes

NPS and Diabetes TASMANIA have developed an educational DVD which addresses medicines use issues for people with type 2 diabetes, '[Diabetes, medicines and me – a guide for people living with type 2 diabetes](#)'.

The DVD is designed to be used by health professionals and community organisations when discussing the management of type 2 diabetes with newly diagnosed patients.

It contains 11 segments which cover issues including the types of medicines used to manage type 2 diabetes, the best ways to manage medicines, and what patients should discuss with their healthcare providers. The individual segments are available online at http://www.nps.org.au/consumers/video/diabetes_medicines.

The DVD is also being produced in Cantonese, Mandarin and German as there is a high prevalence of type 2 diabetes within these ethno-specific groups in Australia.

To order the DVD phone Diabetes TASMANIA on 03 6215 9000.

8) National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2010

In the constantly evolving world of medicines, NPS is once again hosting the [National Medicines Symposium](#) and is now calling for abstracts from across the health sector.

This year's theme is *Medicines in people's lives*, which enables us to address [quality use of medicines](#) in the wider context of changes within the health sector, including reforms and new prescribers.

NMS 2010 will be held at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre from 26 - 28 May 2010. Visit www.nms2010.org.au.

9) NPS publications

NPS News

Download the latest [NPS News](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/publications.

NPS News is a bi-monthly publication to keep you informed of quality use of medicines issues in relation to different therapeutic areas.

Prescribing Practice Review

Download the latest [Prescribing Practice Review](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/publications.

Prescribing Practice Review (PPR) provides key messages for quality prescribing on selected therapeutic topics and evidence-based prescribing information.

NPS RADAR

Download the latest [NPS RADAR](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/radar.

NPS RADAR offers you evidence-based information about new medicines, new Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings and research.

Australian Prescriber

Download the latest [Australian Prescriber](#) or visit www.australianprescriber.com

Australian Prescriber is a bi-monthly, independent publication that provides readily accessible information about drugs and therapeutics.

Medicines Talk

Download the latest [Medicines Talk](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications.

Medicines Talk is written by consumers for consumers. We invite you to print copies for use in doctors' rooms, hospital waiting rooms and visitors' areas.

Medicines Update

Download the latest [Medicines Update](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications.

Medicine Update lets you know about new medicines and new PBS listings. Each issue provides an independent assessment of current information and research about a different medicine.

10) NPS RSS feed

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National Prescribing Service Ltd (NPS) is an independent, non-profit organisation for Quality Use of Medicines. We provide accurate, balanced, evidence-based information and services to help people choose if, when and how to use medicines to improve their health and wellbeing. We are member-based and work in partnership with health professionals, government, pharmaceutical industry and consumers. NPS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.