**Prescribing Tip No. 219 Date: 4th October 2018**

**Prescribing of thickeners and the change in International Dysphagia guidelines**

**– updated information**

**Prescribing tip for actioning by practice team**

In April 2018 Thick and Easy Clear was implemented as the **first choice** thickener in Greater Preston and Chorley & South Ribble CCG’s. Our advice at the time was to switch patients prescribed a thickener to this product (Prescribing tip 200).

Secondary care will continue to use Resource Thicken Up Clear as this is the most cost-effective choice for them. However, secondary care is aware that patients will be switched to Thick and Easy Clear in primary care.

In addition to this formulary change **the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation (IDDSI)** is being gradually introduced between April 2018 and April 2019. This is an international change which brings into line dysphagia guidance and terminology from around the world. This standardisation will change the terminology used to describe the consistency of drinks and food from stages to levels and increase the number of levels of consistency of food and drink recommended **across all brands of thickeners**. Please see website<http://iddsi.org/>for further information**.**

**IDDSI conversion chart** (Information in relation to the number of scoops relates specifically to Thick and Easy Clear preparation).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Previous directions for use | Switched to | New directions for use | Scoops per 200ml |
| No Stage |  | Level 1 (New Level) Slightly thick | 1 scoop |
| Stage 1 (Syrup) | Switching to | Level 2 ((mildly Thick) | 2 scoops |
| Stage 2 (Custard) | Switching to | Level 3 (Moderately Thick) | 3 scoops |
| Stage 3 (Pudding) | Switching to | Level 4 (Extremely Thick) | 6 scoops |

Fresenius Kabi (the manufacturer of Thick and Easy Clear) will start to change the labelling on their product from the end of October 2018 but there will inevitably be a transition period where existing stock may still be in circulation.

To help patients, carers and practices through this transition period: **Advice for practices**

* The SALT team letter should be sent out from practices to all patients prescribed a Thickener (including those in a care home) to explain what is going to happen. 
* Some companies have already changed the labelling of their product to the new terminology. **It is important that if patients can't be switched to Thick and Easy Clear** (eg patients with a previous intolerance to this product) **they too receive the letter from the SALT team explaining the changes.**
* During this transition period prescriptions for thickeners should **not** be issued with any specific directions for use from the surgery. Patients/carers should instead be encouraged to read the labels on every tin to ensure they are still using the correct number of scoops required.
* Any new patients who have been assessed by the SALT team or discharged from the hospital will receive information regarding their thickener using the updated IDDSI terminology.

Fresenius Kabi are changing the labels on their tins from the end of October 2018 however some tins which have been over labelled may be in circulation before this date. (It should be clear on the tin if they have been over labelled as there should be a sticker on the tin lid and new IDDSI directions on the side of the tin). Representatives from Fresenius Kabi are gradually working their way around care homes to provide training on mixing Thick and Easy Clear and the new IDDSI guidelines.

**To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302**