**Prescribing Tip No. 302 Date: 15th October 2020**

**Prescribing Tip – Dependence Forming Medications**

The Royal Collage of General Practitioners (RCGP) have produced a “**Top Ten Tips”** document of the considerations that should be made prior to the prescribing of **Dependence Forming Medications (DFMs).**

[Top Ten Tips – Dependence Forming Medications](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/CIRC/Desktop-guides/Top-Ten-Tips-Dependence-Forming-Medications-April-2019.ashx?la=en)

DFMs are mainly opioids, z drugs, benzodiazepines, gabapentin and pregabalin. Dependence is defined as ‘the need to continue taking a medicine to maintain a state of normality and avoid symptoms of withdrawal’.

The RCGP suggests these key points when prescribing DFMs:

* Prescribers should ask themselves if issuing a DFM is safe for the patient and for the people in that household and local community.
* Have open discussions with patients regarding the risks of prescribing DFMs. Set review dates and boundaries with prescribing. Document these discussions in the patients’ medical records.
* Review DFMs frequently and monitor for overuse, misuse, early prescription requests and medicines from other sources (Out of hours, Accident and Emergency Department etc.)
* Learn more about deprescribing DFMs to support patients when reducing or withdrawing these medications.
* Always prescribe within your competency and be aware of the licensed indications for DFMs.
* Contact your local drugs misuse team to find out what support they can provide for patients’ dependent on prescribed DFMs.

Opioids have a **limited** role in managing chronic pain. High doses over 120mg of Morphine Equivalent are associated with **increasing** risk of harm **without** the increased benefit.

[LMMG Chronic Pain Prescriber Resources](https://www.lancsmmg.nhs.uk/clinical-resources/prescriber-resources/chronic-pain-prescriber-resources/) [Opioids Aware Resources](https://fpm.ac.uk/opioids-aware)

The below embedded documents are PrescQipp resources to aid with deprescribing Benzodiazepines and Opioids. To fully access the links within the documents, practices will need to register with the PrescQipp website. If further support is required with registering please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team.

 