

Prescribing tip for information



Levothyroxine: new MHRA prescribing advice for patients who experience symptoms on switching between different levothyroxine products

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has advised that if a patient reports persistent symptoms when switching between different levothyroxine tablet formulations, to consider consistently prescribing a specific product known to be well tolerated by the patient. If symptoms or poor control of thyroid function persist (despite adhering to a specific product), consider prescribing levothyroxine in an oral solution formulation.¹ This follows reports of patients experiencing side-effects on switching between different levothyroxine products.

- Generic prescribing of levothyroxine remains appropriate for the majority of patients and the licensing of these generic products is supported by bioequivalence testing;
- A small proportion of patients treated with levothyroxine report symptoms, often consistent with thyroid dysfunction, when their levothyroxine tablets are changed to a different product – these cases are noted in [UK professional guidelines](#) ;
- If a patient reports symptoms after changing their levothyroxine product, consider testing thyroid function;
- If a patient is persistently symptomatic after switching levothyroxine products, whether they are biochemically euthyroid or have evidence of abnormal thyroid function, consider consistently prescribing a specific levothyroxine product known to be well tolerated by the patient;
- If symptoms or poor control of thyroid function persist despite adhering to a specific product, consider prescribing levothyroxine in an oral solution formulation* ;
- Report suspected adverse reactions to levothyroxine medicines, including symptoms after switching products, to the [Yellow Card scheme](#).

*The BNF and drug tariff list several licensed liquid preparations in 25 mcg/5ml; 50 mcg/5ml; 100 mcg/5ml and 125 mcg/5ml oral solution sugar free preparations with differing prices for each. If a liquid preparation is necessary please check the [Drug Tariff | NHSBSA](#) for the most cost-effective option or contact the Medicines Optimisation Team for advice.

For full details on the numbers and types of adverse events reported as well as suggested causative factors see the [MHRA Drug Safety Update](#).

Reference

1. [Levothyroxine: new prescribing advice for patients who experience symptoms on switching between different levothyroxine products - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) accessed 18/08/21

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302

If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips please contact Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net