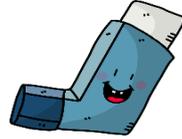


Prescribing tip No: 369
Date: 25th August 2022

Prescribing Tip For Action



Greener Inhaler Waste



Did you know?

In England, more than 65 million inhalers are prescribed every year, with the most frequently prescribed being pressurised Metered Dose Inhalers (pMDIs) and Dry Powder Inhalers. pMDIs currently use hydrofluorocarbon gases (HFCs or 'F-gases') as propellants. When released from the inhaler, HFCs remain in the atmosphere for approximately 270 years, and they are potent greenhouse gases between 1,300 and 3,350 times greater than CO².

When a metered dose inhaler is empty the canister still contains significant amounts of propellants that are contributing to global warming. If these inhalers are placed in general household waste, they will be sent to landfill sites where they will be crushed. Landfill disposal of inhalers is harmful to the environment, due to the residual gas from canisters being released into the atmosphere.

The NHS aims to reduce its Carbon Footprint: for the emissions we control directly, to net zero by 2040 and for the emissions we can influence, to net zero by 2045. [Greener NHS \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/greener-nhs/)

If all used inhalers in the UK were returned for safe disposal, this **could** save 512,330 tonnes of CO²eq annually – this equivalent to the emissions from a VW Golf car being driven around the world 88,606 times.

What you can do!

Encourage all patients to return **all** Inhalers to pharmacies for safe disposal along with other medicines waste. They will be thermally treated to destroy the greenhouse gases.

Suggestion - Search for all patients with Inhalers on repeat and send [information on returning inhalers to pharmacies](#) for safe disposal via text message or email.

Further information and resources can be found on [Greener Practice](#) .

Community Pharmacy teams are also educating patients who use inhalers about the environmental benefits of returning their inhalers to the pharmacy for disposal, rather than putting them in their domestic refuse.

See [PSNC Briefing](#)

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