



Consortium of Local Medical Committees

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Patient Communications RE rescue packs & inhalers

Rescue Packs:

We have been made aware of some inaccurate information circulating (especially on social media) regarding rescue packs. Practices may wish to use the following message to patients:

We have been made aware of some inaccurate information circulating (especially on social media) regarding special 'rescue packs' of antibiotics and oral steroids for patients with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (or even for those who don't have these conditions).

We would like to reassure you that patients who suffer with severe respiratory conditions already have these in place (along with the instructions on how to use them). Oral steroids are powerful medicines and any decision to use them would need careful evaluation by a prescriber, usually a doctor or respiratory specialist nurse.

Please do not contact your GP practice for a rescue pack unless this is something that has been previously agreed and prescribed by your medical team. You should continue to manage your condition in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of COVID-19, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or call 111 (online services should be used as a first choice) before doing anything else.

Inhalers:

We are aware of increasing requests for inhalers from patients who have not had them for a significant period. Each patient should be reviewed on an individual basis and certainly not all patients should have these prescribed as there should be a clinical need for this. Patients who have not had these for at least 18 months probably do not need a prescription but may need them prescribing in future if they have a clinical need. There is a risk to general supply of these for those who do need them if we significantly change the normally prescribing rate and we are already seeing many stock shortages with these. In the meantime, if you have patients who do require an inhaler then we would suggest limiting this to one inhaler where appropriate to help manage the supply chain.