



Department of

**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

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From The Chief Pharmaceutical Officer  
**Dr Norman Morrow**

**For Action:** Directors of Pharmaceutical Services of the Boards & CSA  
Regional Quality Improvement Authority

Our reference: PHC/03/08  
Date: 26 March 2008

Dear Pharmacist

### **Updated advice - Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines for young children**

The Paediatric Medicines Expert Advisory Group and the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) have issued updated advice on the management of cough and colds in children, following a review of the safety and efficacy of over-the-counter cough and cold medicines which are licensed for use in children.

In summary, this advice is:

- Children suffering from a cough or cold should be treated with paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower the child's temperature, and if they have a cough to use a simple cough syrup (such as glycerol, honey or lemon);
- Non-prescription cough and cold preparations containing any of the active substances set out below\* should not be used in children under 2 years;
- For children aged 2-6 years, care should be taken to adhere to the maximum daily dose; not to take with other cough and cold medicines; and the advice of a pharmacist or other healthcare professional should be sought if there are any concerns.

Further information is given in the attached article which will appear in the April edition of *Drug Safety Update*.

Products with the updated advice on their packaging, and in the Patient Information Leaflets, will be in pharmacies and stores by October 2008. In the interim, a leaflet for patients/carers will be available for additional advice – a copy is attached; it is also available on our website ([www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk)).

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\* Brompheniramine, Chlorphenamine, Dextrometorphan, Diphenhydramine, Ephedrine, Guaifenesin, Ipecacuanha, Oxymetazoline, Phenylephrine, Pholcodine, Pseudoephedrine & Xylometazoline

The following products directly targeted at children under 2 should be removed from open shelves:

- Asda Children's Chesty Cough Syrup [PL 03105/0056 – MAH: Bell's]
- Boots Chesty Cough Syrup 1 Year Plus [PL 00014/0381 – MAH: Boots]
- Boots Sore Throat and Cough Linctus 1 Year Plus [PL 00014/5152R – MAH: Boots]
- Buttercup Infant Cough Syrup [PL 02855/0022 – MAH: Chefaro]
- CalCough Chesty [PL 15513/0052 – MAH: McNeil]
- Children's Chesty Cough [PL 03105/0056 – MAH: Bell's]

**- these medicines can still be supplied under the supervision of a pharmacist for older children.**

A range of products will remain on general sale for use in children under 2 years old. These include simple cough medicines containing glycerol, lemon or honey.

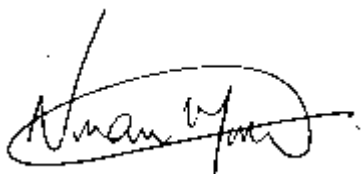
Single-constituent paracetamol and ibuprofen products are not affected by this advice.

For any queries about the contents of this letter, please contact the MHRA Information Centre by email ([info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk)) or by telephone (020 7084 2000).

Area Boards/RQIA should bring this information to the attention of private hospitals/clinics registered with them, Out of Hours Centres and any other relevant care facilities.

The Central Services Agency is asked to bring this information to the attention of Community Pharmacists immediately.

Yours sincerely



**DR NORMAN MORROW**  
Chief Pharmacist

For information:

CMO  
CNO  
CDO  
CISSI  
SMO  
Director, Health Estates  
Public Health Branch  
DHSSPS, Library  
Extended nurse prescribers  
NICPPET

Regional Medicines and Poisons Information Service  
Regional Director of Supplies  
RPLS  
Pharmaceutical Society of NI  
Senior Prison Pharmacist  
Prison Service, Dundonald House  
Nursing Officer, Health Estates  
Medical Officer, Castle Buildings  
Regional Procurement Pharmacist  
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