

BNF CLARIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

PREPARATION COMMENTS

Categorical information about marketed medicines, such as price and pack size that appears under the heading of “Medicinal Forms” in BNF Publications is, as in previous editions, derived from the Drug Tariff and the Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d) provided by the NHS Business Services Authority.

In the new BNF, all clinical information has been removed from this section.

The medicinal forms record provides information on the type of formulation (for example, tablet), the amount of active drug in a solid dosage form, and the concentration of active drug in a liquid dosage form. The legal status is shown for prescription-only medicines and controlled drugs, as well as pharmacy medicines and medicines on the general sales list. Practitioners are reminded, by a statement under the heading of “Medicinal Forms” that not all products containing a specific drug ingredient may be similarly licensed. To be clear on the precise licensing status of specific medicinal forms, practitioners should check the product literature for the particular product being prescribed or dispensed.

Details of medicinal forms available on the dm+d for each drug in BNF Publications appears online on MedicinesComplete. In print editions, due to space constraints, only certain branded products are included in detail. Other available brands or branded generics of the same medicinal form may appear under the form heading – the names of these will be preceded by the statement “Brands may include”.

This should not be inferred as equivalence to the other brands listed under the same form heading. For example, all the products listed under a heading of “Modified-release capsule” will be available as modified-release capsules, however, the brands listed under that form heading may have different release profiles, the available strengths may vary and/or the products may have different

licensing information. As with previous editions of the BNF, practitioners must ensure that the particular product being prescribed or dispensed is appropriate.

Much of the clinical information previously included in the preparations section with the categorical product information is still present and may be contained in the monograph under sections such as dose equivalence and conversion (in the tinted dose box) and also in Prescribing and dispensing information. Nevertheless, we recognise that additional information could aid prescribers and we are undertaking a review based on feedback to consider further additions. Thus far the following items have been highlighted as desirable:

- mmol to mg or g equivalences for some preparations of calcium, magnesium, phosphate, potassium, sodium bicarbonate and gelatin
- microgram equivalent to the units per vial for lenograstim and filgrastim
- dose equivalences for iron preparations
- conversion of zinc sulfate to elemental zinc
- more detail on the available morphine sulfate modified-release preparations
- an indication that pancreatin is from pork

As medicinal forms are derived from dm+d data, some drugs may appear under names derived from that data; this may vary slightly from those in previous BNF versions, for example sodium acid phosphate, is now sodium dihydrogen phosphate anhydrous, however, it is still under the brand of Phosphate-Sandoz®.

In addition, there are a small number of preparations that do not appear in the current edition of the BNF due to dm+d linking issues. We are working to resolve these issues.

- Yellow soft paraffin (simple eye ointment). The 4 g pack size for yellow soft paraffin is missing
- Ketovite liquid

SPECIFIC DRUG MONOGRAPH COMMENTS

ANTACIDS AND SODIUM CONTENT

In previous BNF editions, certain antacids were identified as “low sodium”. However, this information was not comprehensive, has therefore been removed from the new BNF, and will be considered for future updates.

INSULINS

Insulin monographs were identified as short-acting in previous editions. In the new edition, short-acting insulins are not explicitly listed as such, although the duration of action of insulins is stated. Following user feedback, this will be made explicit for future editions.

QUININE AND DOXYCYCLINE

In the quinine monograph under the malaria indication there is a note to advise that treatment should be followed up with other antibacterials. It has been suggested that this contains an error, as it mentions doxycycline, which can only be used in children over 12.

The doxycycline monograph, which contains the dosing information does make it clear that this use is only for children over 12; however, we recognise it would be helpful to add clarity to the quinine monograph so that users can more quickly identify that doxycycline is an option only for those 12 years and over.

FORMATTING AND STRUCTURE

POSITIONING OF DRUG INFORMATION

We have received enquiries about why information on the use of certain drugs has been moved from the chapter in which it was previously found. For example, the dose of diazepam for spasticity is now in chapter 4 (previously in chapter 10), the dose of dexamethasone for croup is in the dexamethasone monograph (previously in the prescribing notes for croup in chapter 3), and information on obesity has been moved to chapter 1 (previously in chapter 4).

These changes are explained in the document ‘How to use the BNF’ [here](#).

POSITIONING OF OTHER INFORMATION

Chapters have been rearranged alphabetically by therapeutic use, Emergency treatment of Poisoning is now found at the end of the chapters, in a newly created Chapter 16, NICE TA and NHS restrictions information is now found in the individual drug monographs under National Funding/Access decisions. These changes are highlighted in ‘How to use the BNF’ [here](#).

MONOGRAPH STRUCTURE

Information around how a drug can be prescribed and dispensed or additional useful information which may influence the choice of preparation prescribed or dispensed can now be found in the “Prescribing and Dispensing Information” section. For example, the information previously found in the “Safe Practice” box under the Gaviscon infant preparation can now be found in the Prescribing and dispensing section of the relevant monograph.

Further information on structural changes to these new editions is available in the ‘How to use the BNF’ [here](#). In addition, clinicians may like to access the CPPE programme developed to aid understanding of the changes to the new BNF Publications, available [here](#).

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

In the abbreviations and symbols section, which appears in the inside back cover of the BNF, Controlled Drug (CD) symbols are listed CD1, CD2, CD3, CD4-1 and CD4-2. As preparation information is now derived directly from dm+d data, the CD symbols under medicinal forms are those from that data, for example “Schedule 2 (CD)” or “CD Benz”. The CD symbols in the abbreviations and symbols section will be updated for the next print edition.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

We are aware that other there have been other comments concerning the display and/or formatting of other sections of BNF content:

- The word “initially” is considered to appear unnecessarily in some dose statements—this will be reviewed for future publications;
- Print size for brand name is small and difficult to read—while the new formatting prioritises space in print for clinical information we are working with our designers to see if improvements can be made to readability;
- Information on the treatment of acute and chronic asthma are now in the text rather than tables—we will consider the design of this information for clarity;
- Status epilepticus—some consider that dosing information could be made more easily identifiable—this will be reviewed for future publications;
- Comments on index content and formatting—while the monographs, preparations and treatment summaries are indexed we will consider additional content for future print editions, as well as reviewing formatting. While additional manual checks were made on the index a small number of corrections to page numbers have been identified and these will be addressed in future editions.