

## The College of Podiatry: update on the supply of ibuprofen in light of COVID19

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, in conjunction with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, has undertaken a 'clinical rapid evidence review' to examine existing evidence of the impact of the **acute** use of certain non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in people with or at risk of COVID-19 illness.

The review examined available evidence to determine whether or not acute use of certain NSAID medicines may increase the severity or length of COVID-19 illness.

NHS England has now (14th April) issued a rapid policy statement based on an assessment of the best available evidence to determine whether there is any increased risk of developing COVID-19 in people using NSAIDs acutely, and whether using NSAIDs acutely can lead to an increased risk of developing more severe symptoms of COVID-19. Long term use of NSAIDs is outside the scope of the rapid policy statement.

No evidence from published scientific studies was found to determine whether or not acute use of NSAIDs is related to increased risk of developing COVID-19 or increased risk of a more severe illness. It recommends that when patients, carers or healthcare professionals are starting treatment for fever and/or pain in patients (adults or children) with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, all treatment options should be considered and selected based on the greatest benefit compared to potential harms using each medicine's product information. If used, the lowest effective dose of NSAID should be used for the shortest period required to control symptoms. This is in line with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) statement on the 18th March 2020 (European Medicines Agency, 2020).

The long-term use of NSAIDs is outside of the scope of the current policy statement, and will form part of a separate review. The current advice for patients taking long-term NSAIDs for chronic conditions from the EMA and central alerting system (CAS) alert is to continue this treatment, which may require re-assessment of medication should COVID-19 infection arise.

The College of Podiatry continues to advise caution and asks members to seek alternative treatments where possible until such time as more definitive evidence is available.

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