

East Lancashire Medicines Management Board Statement

The Prescribing of High Concentration Fluoride Toothpaste

Recommendations from the Dental Transformation Board Position:

DENTAL PRESCRIBING ONLY

- Not for GP prescribing on FP10
- High concentration fluoride toothpaste is an effective preventive intervention for those giving concern to their dentist and are at particular risk of developing dental decay.
- The use of high concentration fluoride toothpaste should be a part of other professional oral health promotion interventions.
- Patients using high concentration fluoride toothpaste should be under the care of a dentist.
- A guidance of “Dentists only” prescribing high concentration fluoride toothpaste in the East Lancashire Health Economy Area should be endorsed by the East Lancashire Health Economy Medicines Management Board and such guidance communicated to local professionals

The East Lancashire Health Economy Medicines Management Board has been considering how to manage the significant increase in repeat prescribing of high strength fluoride toothpaste by local General Medical Practitioners (GMPs) and the implications for patients. Consideration has been given to a shared care arrangement as well as prescribing by dentists only. To aid the discussions, the NHS Lancashire Dental Transformation Board has been asked for a position statement on this issue.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to outline the rationale for the position taken by the NHS Lancashire Dental Transformation Board and its recommendation to the East Lancashire Health Economy Medicines Management Board on the prescribing of high concentration fluoride toothpaste in their health economy area.

Oral health is an integral part of general health. Poor oral health can therefore have a detrimental effect on general health resulting in a significant impact on quality of life. Dental caries (dental decay) is one of the main contributors to poor oral health. Dental decay is however preventable. The delivery of fluoride to the tooth surface through various means has been shown to be a very effective intervention for the prevention and arresting of dental decay [1].

As regular tooth brushing forms part of the daily routine of the majority of people, it is viewed as a simple but key method of applying fluoride to tooth surfaces [2]. High concentration fluoride toothpaste typically containing 2800 or 5000 ppm fluoride,

available as prescription only medication, has been shown to be effective in older children and adults who are at particular risk of developing dental decay [3, 4]. “Delivering Better Oral Health - An evidence-based toolkit for prevention” [5] is the Department of Health’s most up to date published guidance on effective oral health promoting care at a practice level. For those giving concern to their dentist (such as those likely to develop dental decay, undergoing orthodontic treatment, with obvious current active dental decay, with dry mouth and/or other predisposing factors and those with special needs), this guidance recommends the use of high concentration fluoride toothpaste as part of other professional oral health promotion interventions.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance for dental recall [6] recommends that the oral health risks of patients are taken into account when considering the recall intervals. It is important to ensure that patients who are prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste are under the care of a dental team in order to receive regular monitoring and management of their dental decay risk. Investment in dentistry over the past years in East Lancashire has ensured that access to NHS dentistry in the East Lancashire Health Economy area has significantly improved. Patients giving concern to their general medical practitioner as at risk of dental decay should be advised to seek dental help with clear advice about how to access that help. Access to all dental services, including urgent, routine and continuing care, is available via the **East Lancashire Dental Helpline on 0845 5333 230**. Posters advising patients of this number are available for General Medical Practitioners to display.

References:

1. Marinho, V.C., et al., *Topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels or varnishes) for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents*. Cochrane Database Syst Rev, 2003(4): p. CD002782.
2. Walsh, T., et al., *Fluoride toothpastes of different concentrations for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents*. Cochrane Database Syst Rev, 2010(1): p. CD007868.
3. Tavss, E.A., et al., *Relationship between dentifrice fluoride concentration and clinical caries reduction*. Am J Dent, 2003. **16**(6): p. 369-74.
4. Baysan, A., et al., *Reversal of primary root caries using dentifrices containing 5,000 and 1,100 ppm fluoride*. Caries Res, 2001. **35**(1): p. 41-6.
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