

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride

HSS(MD)23/2020



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnstríe O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

For Action:

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social
Care Board/HSC Trusts/ NIAS

GP Medical Advisers, Health & Social Care Board

All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward
distribution to practice staff*)

OOHs Medical Managers (*for onward distribution to staff*)

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)23/2020

Date: 15 April 2020

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

Dear Colleague

**COVID-19 – MESSAGE TO ALL CLINICAL STAFF – IBUPROFEN AND
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

This letter is an update to our previous letter HSS(MD)15/2020 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/HSS%28MD%29-15-2020.pdf> issued on 18 March 2020.

The Commission of Human Medicines (CHM) has been asked to review the safety of ibuprofen in patients with COVID-19. The Commission on Human Medicines' Expert Working Group on coronavirus (COVID-19) has concluded that there is currently insufficient evidence to establish a link between use of ibuprofen, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and contracting or worsening of COVID19.

Patients can take paracetamol or ibuprofen when self-medicating for symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever and headache, and should follow advice available at the PHA website <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus> if they have any questions or if symptoms get worse.

Taking Ibuprofen

Patients should always read the patient information when taking over-the-counter medicines, such as ibuprofen and paracetamol, and follow the instructions on how to take the medicines.

Prescribing Ibuprofen

Healthcare professionals should consider a patient's individual risk factors, including any history of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal illness, when prescribing ibuprofen. Additionally, ibuprofen should be used with caution in patients with known renal impairment.

The lowest effective dose of ibuprofen should be used for the shortest duration necessary to control symptoms.

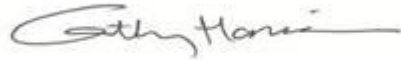
Patients who have been prescribed NSAIDs as a treatment for a long-term condition, such as arthritis, should keep taking these medicines as normal. Adult patients who take low-dose 75 mg aspirin regularly for prevention of heart attacks or for vascular disease should continue to do so.

Healthcare professionals, patients and carers should report any suspected side effects from a medicine including those purchased over-the-counter to the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer



MRS CATHY HARRISON
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Circulation List

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)
Assistant Director Public Health (*Health Protection*), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts
RQIA (for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals)
Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board (*for cascade to prescribing advisers*)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
Professor Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB
Professor Sonja McIlpatrick, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster
Caroline Lee, CEC
Donna Gallagher, Open University
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, UU

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>