

From the Chief Medical Officer
Professor Sir Michael McBride



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 18/2026

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PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

Dear Colleague

MHRA DRUG SAFETY UPDATE: Nasal decongestant sprays and drops containing xylometazoline hydrochloride / oxymetazoline hydrochloride: increased risk of rebound congestion, rhinitis medicamentosa, and tachyphylaxis with overuse

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued the below Drug Safety Update.

Healthcare Professionals are asked to note and action the advice for healthcare professionals and advice for healthcare professionals to provide to patients contained within the Drug Safety Update.

Please find the link to the complete **MHRA Drug Safety Update** included below:

[Nasal decongestant sprays and drops containing xylometazoline hydrochloride / oxymetazoline hydrochloride: increased risk of rebound congestion, rhinitis medicamentosa, and tachyphylaxis with overuse](#)

There have been reports of worsening nasal congestion (rebound congestion) when the effects of nasal decongestant sprays or drops containing xylometazoline hydrochloride and oxymetazoline hydrochloride, referred to hereafter as 'xylometazoline' and 'oxymetazoline', wear off. This typically occurs when these medicines are used for longer than recommended. Continued use can also lead to more serious and longer-lasting changes to the lining and structures of the nose

(rhinitis medicamentosa). In addition, repeated use will result in a rapid and noticeable reduction in the medicine's effectiveness (tachyphylaxis).

Patients and caregivers should be informed not to exceed the recommended dose and not to use for more than 5 consecutive days. Continuous use of these medicines for more than 5 days can lead to an increased risk of side effects. Medical advice should be sought if symptoms of nasal congestion persist, worsen or do not improve after 5 days, as alternative treatment may be required.

Reporting advice

Healthcare professionals, patients, and caregivers are asked to submit reports using the Yellow Card scheme electronically using:

- the [Yellow Card website](#).
- the Yellow Card app; download from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#)
- some clinical IT systems for healthcare professionals

When reporting suspected adverse drug reactions, please provide as much information as possible, including information about medical history, any concomitant medication, onset timing, and treatment dates.

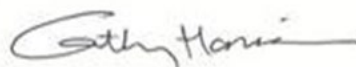
For queries or more information, please contact info@mhra.gov.uk.

You can subscribe to the MHRA Safety Roundup bulletin [here](#). The latest MHRA Safety Roundup is available at the following link: [MHRA Safety Roundup](#).

Yours sincerely



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PROFESSOR CATHY HARRISON
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