

Position statement on the prescribing of omega-3 and fish oil supplements

Following the local Spending NHS Money Wisely public consultation, the Governing Bodies of the BHR CCGs met in common on 29th June 2017 to agree changes to prescribing across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

From 10th July 2017
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGs) no longer supports the prescribing of omega-3 and fish oil supplements

Decision

- The decision to stop the prescribing of omega-3 and fish oil supplements applies to ALL patients across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. BHR CCGs have agreed NO exceptions to this recommendation

This decision was made because:

- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that healthcare professionals should tell people that there is no evidence that omega-3 fatty acid compounds help to prevent cardiovascular disease
- NICE also recommends against offering omega-3 fatty acid compounds to patients
- Patients can increase their omega-3 intake by consuming at least 2 portions of fish per week, including a portion of oily fish
- If people want to continue omega-3 and/or fish oil supplements, they are widely available to purchase at reasonable cost at supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers
- BHR CCGs have a duty to spend taxpayer's money wisely, to make sure they get the best value possible – especially when NHS funding is being severely squeezed and more patients are being seen with more complex health issues than ever before

Guidance for hypertriglyceridaemia

To avoid the risk of acute pancreatitis an exception to the agreed guidance permits prescribing of licensed omega-3 products for the treatment of patients with hypertriglyceridaemia -

- Who have a proven intolerance with fibrate treatment (either as monotherapy or in combination with a statin)

Or

- On the advice of a lipid specialist in severe hypertriglyceridaemia (triglyceride levels $\geq 10\text{mmol/L}$)

GPs should ensure that hypertriglyceridaemia patients are intolerant to fibrates before prescribing a licensed omega-3 product.