



21st January 2022

Circular 002/22

Treatment of Dry Eye Syndrome & Preferred Blood Glucose Test Strips

Dear Pharmacist,

Please find enclosed a communication from Prof Michael Barry, Clinical Lead of the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) in relation to the treatment of dry eye syndrome. An update to the list of preferred blood glucose test strips (BGTS) for adults with type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus is also included.

Further information on these initiatives is available on the MMP website at www.hse.ie/yourmedicines.

Yours faithfully,

Shaun Flanagan
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement



Re: Treatment of dry eye syndrome & preferred blood glucose test strips

19th January 2022

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this letter is to update you on a number of HSE-Medicines Management Programme (MMP) initiatives.

Treatment of Dry Eye Syndrome

The MMP has completed a review of the treatments for dry eye syndrome (DES). Total expenditure on the Community Drug Schemes on topical treatments available over the counter for DES was €11.25 million in 2020. The MMP has published a Prescribing and Cost Guidance document and associated Tips and Tools, which recommend first-line treatment options based on clinical evidence and cost, and are intended to promote best practice and aid appropriate prescribing in this therapeutic area. The documents are available on the MMP website in the sections entitled *Prescribing and Cost Guidance* and *Tips and Tools*.

Preferred Blood Glucose Test Strips

In January 2021, the MMP published the list of preferred blood glucose test strips (BGTS) with associated meters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have supported this initiative to date. The MMP has reviewed the list of preferred BGTS with associated meters and now recommends the following preferred BGTS:

Preferred BGTS		
Code	BGTS*	Reimbursement price (per 50)
85131	Finetest Lite blood glucose test strips	€6.95
97637	Microdot Max blood glucose test strips	€7.46
85132	Accu-Chek Instant test strips	€8.54
85110	Glucomen Areo Sensor test strips	€9.44
97607	Mylife Unio test strips	€10.50
94170	4Sure blood glucose test strips	€11.22
85120	GlucoRx Nexus test strips	€11.27
85139	GlucoRx HCT glucose test strips	€11.27
85543	Accu-Chek Mobile test cassette	€11.81
15963	Contour Next blood glucose test strips	€14.30
68321	One Touch Verio test strips	€14.30
10051	Freestyle Optium test strips	€14.30

*Listed in order of ascending reimbursement price, prices as of 1st December 2021

The MMP recommends that healthcare professionals continue to give due consideration to the use of a preferred BGTS when commencing self-monitoring of blood glucose, and when changing BGTS in people who are currently not using a preferred product. An updated evaluation report and preferred BGTS poster, which includes information on the preferred list, associated meters and ordering details for free meters, can be accessed on the MMP website in the section entitled *Blood glucose test strips*. The MMP will continue to monitor uptake of the preferred BGTS and expenditure in this area in 2022.

Further information on these initiatives, and others, are available on the MMP website (www.hse.ie/yourmedicines).

My thanks for your ongoing support in promoting safe, effective and cost-effective prescribing.

With best wishes,

Professor Michael Barry
National Clinical Lead, Medicines Management Programme. www.hse.ie/yourmedicines

First-line treatment options should be considered when prescribing for people with DES.

First-line treatment options are considered the BEST-VALUE preparation by the Medicines Management Programme (MMP).

Products listed on this page are examples of the best-value option, per category listed. Full evaluation report is available at: www.hse.ie/yourmedicines. For a full list of reimbursed items and for further information see overleaf. Costs refers to the reimbursed cost of the eye preparation as listed on the HSE PCRS website (www.pcrs.ie). The prices listed do not include mark-up or dispensing fees that private/Drugs Payment scheme patients may be charged.

Prescribing Considerations

- ✓ **First-line treatment options** should be considered initially when prescribing for people with DES.
- ✓ All pharmacological treatments should be used in conjunction with **lifestyle advice**.
- ✓ Choose the **BEST-VALUE** preparation and prescribe by **BRAND** name.
- ✓ Some preparations have up to six months in-use expiry. Do not prescribe these on a monthly-basis without checking the **patient's requirement**.

Abbreviations: DDU: Daily dose units; DES: Dry eye syndrome; MMP: Medicines Management Programme; PVA: Polyvinyl alcohol; SDU: Single dose units

First-Line Treatment

Polyvinyl Alcohol (PVA)

Liquifilm Tears® 1.4%
€2.15 (15 ml)
In-use expiry: 28 days
Contains preservative

Hypromellose

Artelac® 0.32 %
€2.30 (10 ml)
In-use expiry: 28 days
Contains preservative

Alternative First-Line

Carbomer

Xailin® Gel 0.2 %
€2.89 (10 g)
In-use expiry: 28 days
Preservative-free*

*Preservative-free in the eye

Second-Line Treatment

Sodium Hyaluronate

HydraMed® 0.2 %
€5.67 (10 ml)
In-use expiry: 3 months
Preservative-free

+/- Night Lubrication

Xailin® Night
€2.76 (5 g)
In-use expiry: 60 days

Hylo-Night®
€2.91 (5 g)
In-use expiry: 6 months

Night Lubrication: All first- and second-line options can be used with or without additional lubricating agents at night.

- Choose **one first-line treatment option** initially +/- night lubrication.
- If there is insufficient improvement after **6-8 weeks**, consider another first-line agent or a second-line treatment option.

First-Line Treatment Information

- All recommended first-line treatments are multi-dose preparations.
 - Hypromellose may require more frequent administration than carbomer or PVA but may be better tolerated due to **lower viscosity**.
- * Xailin® gel is a first-line option for those requiring **preservative-free treatment**. It contains sodium perborate which is a preservative that disappears upon contact with the eye. Contact lenses must be removed prior to use.

Practice Point

Only consider **preservative-free** preparations first-line where the patient:

- has a true preservative allergy,
- has evidence of epithelial toxicity to the preservatives contained in the preparation,
- needs to use more than six applications of eye drops daily over a prolonged period of time,
- wears contact lenses,
- uses multiple eye products.



Daily Dose Unit (DDU) / Single Dose Unit (SDU)

DDU/SDU preparations are individual dosing units. A DDU is designed for multiple dose administrations within 12 hours, whilst SDUs are for single use only. Due to the high acquisition cost of DDU/SDU products compared to multi-dose alternatives, particularly for more frequent dosing, prescribing should be reserved for circumstances where:

- there are no alternative preparations available,
- the patient has dexterity issues,
- inpatient hospital use (consider multi-dose alternative for discharge).

DDU	SDU		
Sodium Hyaluronate HydraMed® 0.2 % €5.67 (0.5 ml DDU x 30) In-use expiry: 12 hours	Carmellose Carmellose sodium (Alissa) 0.50 % €3.50 (0.4 ml SDU x 30) In-use expiry: single use	Carmellose Celluvisc 0.50 % €3.89 (0.4 ml SDU x 30) In-use expiry: single use	Carmellose Xailin® Fresh 0.50 % €3.50 (0.4 ml SDU x 30) In-use expiry: single use

Eye drop preparations for dry eye syndrome (DES) reimbursed on the community drug schemes

First-Line Treatment Options: PVA, Hypromellose or Carbomer

Note: Carbomer and PVA may require less frequent administration but may be less well tolerated than hypromellose.

Best-value options highlighted in each category

Suitable for use with contact lenses

Carbomer

Note: All of these preparations contain a preservative, however Xailin® Gel* can be considered as a preservative-free alternative as it contains sodium perborate which is a preservative that disappears upon contact with the eye.

Hypromellose

Polyvinyl Alcohol

Brand: Gel Tears® Strength: 0.20 % Pack size: 10 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.89	Brand: Liposic® Gel Strength: 0.20 % Pack size: 10 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.91	Brand: Liquivisc® Gel Strength: 0.25 % Pack size: 10 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.96	Brand: Vidisic® Gel Strength: 0.20 % Pack size: 10 g In-use expiry: one month Cost per pack: €3.16	Brand: Xailin® Gel* Strength: 0.20 % Pack size: 10 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.89	Brand: Artelac® Strength: 0.32 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.30	Brand: Liquifilm Tears® Strength: 1.40 % Pack size: 15 ml In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.15
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Second-Line Treatment Options: Sodium Hyaluronate

Sodium Hyaluronate (All are preservative-free)

Brand: Artelac® Every Day Strength: 0.24 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €5.96	Brand: Blink® Intensive Strength: 0.2 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 45 days Cost per pack: €6.35	Brand: HydraMed® Strength: 0.2 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 3 months Cost per pack: €5.67	Brand: Hylo-Care® Strength: 0.1 % Pack size: 7.5 ml In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €6.54	Brand: Hylo-Forte® Strength: 0.2 % Pack size: 7.5 ml In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €6.72	Brand: Hy-Opti Strength: 0.1 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 8 weeks Cost per pack: €6.16	Brand: Hy-Opti Strength: 0.2 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 8 weeks Cost per pack: €6.72	Brand: Hylo-Tear® Strength: 0.1 % Pack size: 7.5 ml In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €6.16	Brand: Thealoz® Duo Strength: 0.15 % Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 3 months Cost per pack: €6.75
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Eye ointments for additional lubrication

Eye drops for additional lubrication

Brand: Hylo Night® Pack size: 5 g In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €2.91	Brand: Lacri-Lube® Pack size: 5 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €3.07	Brand: Lacri-Lube® Pack size: 3.5 g In-use expiry: 28 days Cost per pack: €2.43	Brand: Xailin® Night Pack size: 5 g In-use expiry: 60 days Cost per pack: €2.76	Brand: Artelac® Night Pack size: 10 ml In-use expiry: 6 months Cost per pack: €6.46
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Daily Dose Units (DDU)

Single Dose Units (SDU)

Sodium Hyaluronate	Carbomer	Carmellose			Hypromellose			Hytellose	
Brand: HydraMed® Strength: 0.2 % Pack size: 0.5 ml DDU x 30 In-use expiry: 12 hours Cost per pack: €5.67	Brand: Vidisic® Strength: 0.20 % Pack size: 0.6 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €8.31	Brand: Carmellose sodium (Alissa) Strength: 0.50 % Pack size: 0.4 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €3.50	Brand: Celluvisc Strength: 0.50 % Pack size: 0.4 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €3.89	Brand: Celluvisc Strength: 1.00 % Pack size: 0.4 ml SDU x 60 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €10.50	Brand: Xailin® Fresh Strength: 0.50 % Pack size: 0.4 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €3.50	Brand: Artelac® Strength: 0.32 % Pack size: 0.5 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €5.59	Brand: Artelac® Strength: 0.32 % Pack size: 0.5 ml SDU x 60 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €9.59	Brand: Hydromoor® Strength: 0.30 % Pack size: 0.4 ml SDU x 30 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €4.32	Brand: Minims® Artificial Tears Strength: 0.44 % Pack size: 0.5 ml SDU x 20 In-use expiry: single use Cost per pack: €7.08

For more information on directions for use, please refer to the individual product information.

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