

Information for Reception Staff – Bladder Medication Review.

To ensure consistency, the reception team should be prepared to handle queries from patients who may be worried about why their "tried and tested" medication is suddenly being questioned.

Here is a guide for your team to use when a patient calls in response to the letter or Text messages.

Tip: How to use this sheet

- **Keep it visible:** Tape it near the phone or save it on the shared drive.
- **Empower staff:** If a patient is angry or confused, staff can say: "The NHS has released new safety guidance on these specific medicines, and we want to make sure you are getting the most up-to-date care."

Reception Script: Bladder Medication Review

1. Opening & Identification

"Hello, [Surgery Name], [Name] speaking. How can I help you?"

(Patient mentions the letter or text about their bladder medicine)

"Ah, yes. We are currently inviting patients who take medicines like **[Oxybutynin/Solifenacin/Tolterodine]** for a quick check-up with our **[Clinical Pharmacist/GP]**."

2. Validating the Review (The "Why")

"The reason for the call is just a routine check. These medicines are effective, but as we get older, they can sometimes cause things like a dry mouth, dizziness, or even a bit of 'brain fog.' The Pharmacist just wants to make sure the medicine is still the best one for you."

3. Addressing Anxiety (If the patient is worried)

- **If the patient says: "But it works well for me!"**
"That's great to hear, and the Pharmacist will want to know that. They aren't necessarily going to stop it; they just want to see if a lower dose or a newer version might be even better for your overall health."
- **If the patient says: "Am I at risk?"**
"Not in the short term, so please don't stop taking it yet. It's just about 'future-proofing' your health and making sure the medicine isn't causing side effects you might not have noticed."

4. Booking the Appointment

Would you prefer a **[phone call]** or to come into the surgery **[in person]**?"

Key Reminders for Staff

- **Don't say "The medicine is bad":** Use phrases like "reducing the burden" or "optimising your treatment."
- **"Anticholinergic" is a mouthful:** If a patient asks what that means, staff can say: "It's just a group of medicines that can sometimes affect things like memory or balance if taken for a long time."

- **No sudden stops:** Always remind the patient: "Please keep taking your tablets as normal until you've had the chat with the clinician."

Staff FAQ: Bladder Medication & ACB Reviews

What is an "Anticholinergic" medicine?

It is a group of medicines used for various things like overactive bladders, sleep, or allergies. While they work well, they block a chemical in the body (acetylcholine) that is important for memory, muscle movement, and saliva production.

Why are we reviewing this now?

As we get older, our brains and bodies become more sensitive to these medicines. What was safe 5 years ago might now be causing "hidden" side effects like confusion, dry mouth, or a higher risk of falling.

Does the patient have to stop their medicine?

Not necessarily. The review is to see if the medicine is still the best fit. Options include:

- Staying on the same medicine but at a lower dose.
- Switching to a newer bladder medicine that doesn't affect memory or balance.
- Discussing non-drug ways to manage symptoms.

What are the "hidden" side effects?

Patients often don't realise their medication is causing these issues. Common ones include:

- **Physical:** Extreme dry mouth, blurred vision, or chronic constipation.
- **Mental:** Feeling "spaced out," forgetful, or "brain fog."
- **Safety:** Feeling dizzy when standing up (which can lead to falls).

Can the patient just stop taking it today?

No. Patients should be advised to continue their medication until they have spoken to the Pharmacist or GP. Stopping bladder medication suddenly can cause symptoms to return quickly or cause a "rebound" effect.

Is this happening because of the patient's age?

It is part of a national NHS safety drive (Structured Medication Reviews) for patients who might be at higher risk of side effects, particularly those over 65 or those taking multiple different medications.

Quick Reference: Common Bladder Meds involved

If a patient calls about these specific drugs, they are likely part of this review:

- **Oxybutynin** (Ditropan / Lyrinel)
- **Solifenacin** (Vesicare)
- **Tolterodine** (Detrusitol)
- **Fesoterodine** (Toviaz)

A reminder of how to use this sheet

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