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10th January 2025

Circular 001/25

RE: Oseltamivir (Tamiflu)

Dear Pharmacist,

Please find attached memo issued from Dr. Eimear Brannigan and Ms. Marie Philbin, Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control Team for your information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Flanagan'.

Shaun Flanagan
Assistant National Director
Primary Care Reimbursement Service



Memo

To: GPs
Pharmacists

From: Dr. Eimear Brannigan, Ms. Marie Philbin, Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control Team

Date: 09/01/2025

Subject: Managing influenza during the 2024/5 winter season

Ref: 2 pages

Dear colleagues,

As we continue through these challenging winter surge weeks in delivering healthcare for patients with respiratory infections we would like to acknowledge the ongoing hard work of all prescribers and dispensers particularly GPs and Pharmacists.

We are contacting you regarding the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu).

Antiviral medications are an important adjunct to vaccination and infection prevention and control practices in the control of influenza. Influenza vaccination and infection prevention and control practices are of the utmost importance in the prevention of influenza and are universally preferred over the administration of chemoprophylaxis.

We would like to remind you of the recommendations on appropriate prescribing of oseltamivir for your patients:

- Treatment of patients with severe illness (influenza/ influenza like illness (ILI))
- Treatment of non-severe influenza in patients at high risk of progression to severe disease following a risk benefit analysis
- Chemoprophylaxis may be considered for asymptomatic persons at extremely high risk for hospitalisation (see below for defined risk groups) if they develop seasonal influenza who have had recent close contact with a person with influenza or influenza like illness (ILI) in the same household or residential setting
- As advised by Public Health in the context of a dynamic risk assessment of care home outbreaks

For further information consult the influenza page on www.antibioticprescribing.ie.

We recommend orders are based on clinical need; this approach to ordering is to seek to maintain access for those patients that need it most.



Patients at higher risk of hospitalisation include those with at least one major risk factor;

- Aged 65 years and older
- Immunocompromising conditions
- Cardiovascular disease
- Neurological disease
- Chronic respiratory disease.

Additional risk factors include:

- Malignancy
- Pregnancy
- Diabetes.

Patients at extremely high risk of hospitalisation are defined as:

- Age 85 years or more; or
- Any age + multiple major risk factors

Thank you for your support during this challenging time.

Kind regards,

Dr. Eimear Brannigan, Clinical Lead, HSE-AMRIC IMC 022539

Ms. Marie Philbin, Chief Pharmacist, HSE-AMRIC PSI 7538

c.c. Consultant Microbiologists
Consultants in Infectious Diseases
Dr. John Cuddihy, National Director, Public Health
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Dr. Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer