

Policy Statement; Prescribing of Omega 3 fatty acids is not supported

Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group does not support the prescribing of omega 3 fatty acids (Omacor[®], Maxepa[®] and Prestylon[®]) as adjunctive therapy in secondary prevention post myocardial infarction (MI) or as adjunctive therapy for hypertriglyceridaemia¹.

NICE guidance does not recommend the prescribing of omega-3 fatty acids for the primary prevention of coronary heart disease.

High doses (4 capsules of Omacor[®] daily) were needed to show a reduction in triglycerides comparable to the reduction seen in trials with fenofibrate; doses lower than this resulted in triglyceride reductions of approximately half this amount.

Evidence for their use post-MI is limited to one open-label trial with notable limitations.

Several large systematic reviews and meta-analyses have shown no benefit of omega-3 fatty acids on mortality or cardiovascular events.

Use in patients with schizophrenia is unlicensed and should be reviewed in conjunction with a specialist with a view to stopping prescribing if no benefit has been achieved.

Evidence for use in other indications such as prevention of dementia, pre-menstrual syndrome, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), atrial fibrillation, eczema, osteoarthritis or age-related macular degeneration is of poor quality and such use is unlicensed.

Recommendations:

- All patients taking omega-3 fatty acid compounds should have their therapy reviewed and new patients should not be commenced on omega-3 fatty acid compounds.
- Consider switching patients taking omega-3 fatty acid compounds for hypertriglyceridaemia to a fibrate or statin.
- Consider stopping omega-3 fatty acid compounds in patients who have had an MI; such patients should be advised to consume two to four portions of oily fish or equivalent per week.
- Patients should be advised to increase their dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids. A patient leaflet can be downloaded from the British Dietetic Association website giving advice on dietary sources and supplements <https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/omega3>

Providers commissioned to provide services on behalf of Mid-Essex CCG are reminded that they are required to follow the Mid-Essex CCG formulary and prescribing guidance as detailed in their contract (Medicines Management Service Specification).

See Mid-Essex CCG website – Medicines Optimisation page for all prescribing guidance.
<http://midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/medicines-optimisation>

1) <http://www.prescqipp.info/-omega-3-fatty-acids/>

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N/A	New policy statement