

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE (NEMLC) BULLETIN

FOR THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2021: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR PUBLIC DISSEMINATION

ACCESS TO STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The following are the latest editions of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML):

- **Primary Health Care:** STGs and EML 2020 Edition (plus updated 2020-3 chapter(s) ratified by NEMLC)
- **Hospital Level Adult:** STGs and EML 2019 Edition
- **Hospital Level Paediatric:** STGs and EML 2017 Edition (plus updated 2022 chapters ratified by NEMLC)
- **Tertiary and Quaternary:** EML July 2021 Edition

The following formats of the STGs and EML are accepted by the National Department of Health (NDoH):

- **EML Clinical Guide mobile application:** To download, click on the link: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.jembi.healthconnect.guides.ps.eml&hl=en_IN&gl=US (Please note that the Primary Health Care STGs on this platform have not yet been updated to the 2020 version, but is accessible on the EMGuidance application)
- **PDF downloads from the NDoH website:** The website is currently being restructured and documents will be available shortly.
- **Knowledge Hub:**

Primary Health Care, 2020	https://www.knowledgehub.org.za/elibrary/primary-healthcare-phc-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-south
Hospital Level – Paediatrics, 2017 (plus updated 2022 chapters ratified by NEMLC)	https://www.knowledgehub.org.za/elibrary/hospital-level-paediatrics-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list
Hospital Level – Adults, 2019	https://www.knowledgehub.org.za/elibrary/hospital-level-adults-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-2nd
Tertiary and Quaternary, July 2021	https://www.knowledgehub.org.za/elibrary/hospital-level-tertiary-and-quaternary-essential-medicines-list

- **Ideal Clinic:** PHC STGs and EML, 2020 edition has also been uploaded to this platform (click the documents tab) - <https://www.idealhealthfacility.org.za/>
- **EMGuidance mobile application:** To sign up, click on the link: <http://onlink.to/sy896k>

ACCESS TO CIRCULARS FROM THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Circulars that are developed by the Essential Drugs Programme are uploaded on the NDoH website and Knowledge Hub. The website is currently being restructured and documents will be available shortly. Please email SAEDP (SAEDP@health.gov.za) if you would like to be put on the mailing list for circulars and other EDP updates.

The following circulars were disseminated from August to December 2021:

- Accessing the Updated Chapters of the Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML – 7 September 2021
- Accessing the Updated Family Planning Chapter of the Primary Healthcare STGs and EML – 22 September 2021
- Preferential Use of J&J Covid-19 Vaccines to Reach Rural and Hard-to-Reach Communities – 14 September 2021
- Discontinuation of Tilidine and Recommended Therapeutic Alternative – 15 December 2022
- Discontinuation of Ferrous Lactate Drops and Recommended Therapeutic Alternative and Dosing – 17 November 2021

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (PHC) AND ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

- The following have been reviewed and *ratified* by NEMLC, with the respective NEMLC report and appropriate medicine review(s):
 - **PHC: Infections Chapter – Malaria STGs** – NEMLC accepted the STG, supporting NEMLC report and evidence reviews for *final ratification*.
 - **PHC: Obstetrics and Gynaecology Chapter** – NEMLC accepted the chapter and supporting report, as amended, for editing and *final ratification*.
 - **Transdermal HT preparations – medicine review** – NEMLC recommended that HT transdermal patches be removed from the chapter and be added to the therapeutic interchange database. The medicine review, amended chapter and report were accepted for *final ratification*.
 - **PHC: Dental Chapter** – NEMLC accepted the chapter for editing and *final ratification*.
 - **Adult Hospital Level: Obstetrics Chapter** – NEMLC accepted the chapter and supporting report, as amended, for editing and *final ratification*.
 - **Nitrous oxide** - Aerolisation with nitrous oxide for pain was a concern in pregnant women with COVID-19, and was recommended for deletion from the STG/EML for this indication.
 - **Adult Hospital Level: Gynaecology Chapter** – NEMLC accepted the chapter and supporting report, as amended, for editing and *final ratification*.
 - **Methotrexate** – A concern was raised regarding the toxicity of methotrexate, and NEMLC recommended that a caution box be added (which was addressed electronically post-meeting).
- The following have been reviewed by NEMLC and ratified for *external comment*, with the respective NEMLC report and appropriate medicine review(s):
 - **Adult Hospital Level: Mental Health Chapter – Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST)**
 - **Methadone for OST medicine review** – NEMLC recommended that the review, OST STG and supporting NEMLC report with the amended OST checklist be disseminated for *external comment*. Until such time that service delivery is sufficient, MMT will be non-EML. However, NEMLC recommends that methadone be made available for pilot sites selected and monitored by the NDoH Programme. Data from such sites should inform further decisions regarding inclusion on the national essential medicine list for universal access.
 - **Buprenorphine for OST medicine review** NEMLC recommended that the review, OST STG and supporting NEMLC report with the amended OST checklist be disseminated for *external comment*.
 - **OST checklist – amended** NEMLC recommended that OST STG and supporting NEMLC report with the amended OST checklist be disseminated for *external comment*.
 - **PHC: Respiratory Chapter**
 - **Tuberculosis Prevention Therapy** – NEMLC accepted the recommendation not to use Tuberculosis Prevention Therapy (TPT) for household contacts. This recommendation and supporting documents have been accepted for *external comment*.
 - **Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Prophylaxis** – NEMLC accepted the recommendation not to use fluoroquinolones as prophylaxis for high-risk contacts of cases of active multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. This recommendation, as amended, and supporting documents have been accepted for *external comment*. NEMLC expanded the rationale to include that the “side-effect profile of long-term fluoroquinolone use and its possible impact on the development of drug resistance were concerns”.

Comments are due by the 9 February 2022 and may be submitted *via* e-mail to:

Ms Trudy Leong

E-mail: trudy.leong@health.gov.za

OTHER MATTERS

- **PHC: Infections Chapter**
 - **Rabies** – NEMLC accepted the proposal that i) Prevention of rabies: Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and ii) Pre-exposure vaccination boosting not be included on the PHC EML and STG, but could probably be considered for NDoH Programmatic Guidance.
- **PHC: HIV and AIDs Chapter**
 - **NADIA and ARTIST trials – evidence summary** – NEMLC accepted the evidence summary and recommended that this be shared with the NDoH Procurement Unit of the Affordable Medicines Directorate.
 - **Atazanavir/ritonavir medicine review - amended** - NEMLC accepted the amended review and recommended that this be shared with the NDoH Procurement Unit of the Affordable Medicines Directorate.
- **Adult Hospital Level: Blood and Blood-Forming Organs (BBFO) Chapter**
 - **Proposal of Therapeutic Classes for Factor VIII and IX** – NEMLC recommended that the matter be deferred for this tender cycle, and recommended that the Tertiary and Quaternary and Paediatric ERCs also review Factor VIII and IX as therapeutic classes.
- **Adult Hospital Level: Nephrology Chapter**
 - **Doxazosin for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia** – NEMLC recommended that a cost comparison be done between the immediate release formulation and the GITS formulation.

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

- The following have been reviewed and ratified by NEMLC, with the respective NEMLC report and appropriate medicine review(s):
 - **Eye Conditions** – NEMLC accepted the chapter for final ratification. The chapter will be sent for clinical editing and then publication.
 - **Paediatric Psychiatry** – NEMLC accepted the chapter for final ratification following proposed changes.
 - **Endocrine** – NEMLC accepted the chapter for final ratification.
- The following have been reviewed by NEMLC and ratified for external comment, with the respective NEMLC report and appropriate medicine review(s):
 - **Adolescence** – NEMLC ratified the chapter for external comment.
 - **Cardiovascular System** – NEMLC ratified the chapter for external comment.
 - **Drug Allergies** – NEMLC ratified the chapter for external comment.
 - **Dermatology** – NEMLC ratified the chapter for external comment following proposed changes.

External comment received from stakeholder by the 9 February 2022 due date will be reviewed by the Paediatric Expert Review Committee.

COVID-19 RAPID REVIEWS

The most current version of the COVID-19 rapid review reports as well as governance documents are available on the NDoH website at: <http://www.health.gov.za/covid-19-rapid-reviews/>

The following rapid reviews had been conducted from August to December 2021 and published in the public domain:

- Rapid review of zinc for COVID-19 – 23 September 2021
- Rapid review of rivaroxaban for COVID-19 – 8 October 2021
- Rapid review of doxycycline for COVID-19 – 15 October 2021
- Rapid review of baricitinib for COVID-19 – 19 October 2021
- Rapid review of fluvoxamine for COVID-19 – 5 November 2021
- Rapid review of molnupiravir for COVID-19 – 20 December 2021

