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Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE (NEMLC) BULLETIN FOR THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2024: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR PUBLIC DISSEMINATION

Accessible on the following platforms:

Knowledge Hub: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/elibrary/national-essential-medicines-list-committee-nemlc-2021-2024>

National Health Insurance (NHI) Website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

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 Healthcare:** STGs and EML 2020 Edition (plus updated chapters for the 2024 edition ratified by NEMLC)
- **Adult Hospital Level:** STGs and EML 2019 Edition (plus updated chapters for the 2024 edition ratified by NEMLC)
- **Paediatric Hospital Level:** STGs and EML 2023 Edition (plus individual chapters)
- **Tertiary and Quaternary:** EML May 2024 Edition

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

- **Knowledge Hub eLibrary** on the link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/e-library>. Refer to Annexure A on the last two pages of the document, for guidance on how to access STGs and EML and related technical documents on the Knowledge Hub.

Keywords:

Resource	Keywords to use in the Search bar	Notes: <i>Folder contents outlined below – constantly updated</i>
Primary Healthcare (PHC) Level, 2020 <i>(plus updated Chapters for the 2024 edition ratified by NEMLC, Medicine Reviews, Costing Reports and Implementation Slides)</i>	Primary Healthcare, PHC, Standard Treatment Guidelines, STGs, Essential Medicines List, EML	Contains complete PDF of 2020 edition, new chapters already reviewed and ratified for the 2024 edition (with supporting NEMLC reports) which will be replacing chapters from the 2020 edition and form part of the 2024 edition, medicine reviews, costing reports, implementation slides, therapeutic interchange database, EML based on 2020 edition of the STGs and EML

<p>Hospital Level – Paediatrics, 2023 <i>(plus updated Chapters ratified by NEMLC, Errata, Medicine Reviews and Costing Reports)</i></p>	<p>Hospital Level, Hospital, Paediatric, Standard Treatment Guidelines, STGs, Essential Medicines List, EML, Medicine Reviews, Costing Reports</p>	<p>Complete PDF of the 2023 edition, updated chapters, individual chapters for the 2023 edition and errata Medicine reviews and costing reports in a separate folder</p>
<p>Hospital Level – Adults, 2019 <i>(plus updated Chapters for the 2024 edition ratified by NEMLC, Errata, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Hospital Level, Hospital, Adult, Standard Treatment Guidelines, STGs, Essential Medicines List, EML, Medicine Reviews, Costing Reports</p>	<p>Contains complete PDF of the 2019 edition, new chapters (with supporting NEMLC reports) already reviewed and ratified for the 2024 edition replacing chapters from the 2020 edition and form part of the 2024 edition, therapeutic interchange database, notices of errata from the 2019 edition, EML based on the 2019 edition of the STGs and EML</p>
<p>Tertiary and Quaternary Level, May 2024</p>	<p>Hospital Level, Hospital, Tertiary & Quaternary, Tertiary, Quaternary, Medicine Recommendations, Medicine Reviews, Costing Reports</p>	<p>2022 - 2024 medicine reviews, costing reports, latest Tertiary and Quaternary EML 2017 – 2021 medicine reviews and costing documents in separate folders but same key words</p>
<p>Health Technology Assessment (HTA)</p>	<p>Health Technology Assessment, Health Technology, HTA, Essential Medicines List</p>	<p>HTA Methods Guide, HTA Methods Guide Templates</p>
<p>Medicine Reviews and Costing Reports</p>	<p>Medicine reviews, reviews, costing reports, costing</p>	<p>Different folders for Paediatrics, Adult and Tertiary/ Quaternary Contains all medicine reviews and costing reports per level of care, except PHC level</p>
<p>Notice for Comment</p>	<p>Notice for Comment, Notice Comment, PHC, Adult, Paediatric, Hospital Level, STGs, EML</p>	<p>Current notices for all levels of care – these notices are removed once comment period is closed</p>

National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC)	NEMLC, National Essential Medicines, Committee	Member photos and short biographies, policies, terms of reference, bulletins
Affordable Medicines Circulares	Affordable Medicines Circulares, Affordable Medicines, Circulares	2022 and 2024 circulares

- **EMGuidance mobile application:** To sign up, click on the link: <http://onelink.to/sy896k>
Please note there may be a lag time for any updated documents on Knowledge Hub to be transcribed onto the EMGuidance platform.
- **NHI website (most updated version of the STGs and EML):** The STGs and EMLs can be accessed by clicking on the link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>. Click on the relevant tab to access the STGs, EMLs and technical documents for each Level of Care.

COVID-19 rapid review reports are still available on the **NDoH website** at: <http://www.health.gov.za/covid-19-rapid-reviews/>

ACCESS TO CIRCULARS FROM THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Circulars that are developed by the Essential Drugs Programme (EDP) are disseminated to EDP stakeholders and uploaded on the Knowledge Hub eLibrary and the Affordable Medicines webpage on the NHI website. These can be accessed on the following links:

Knowledge Hub eLibrary: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/elibrary/affordable-medicines-circulars-2022-2024>

NHI website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

Please email SAEDP (SAEDP@health.gov.za) if you would like to be added to the mailing list for circulars and other EDP updates.

The following circulars/documents were disseminated from April 2024 to June 2024:

- Notice: Publication of the National Essential Medicines List (NEMLC) approved updates to the Adult Hospital Level Chapters: Gynaecology and Systemic and Healthcare-associated Infections for the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML) (2024 Edition) – 13 June 2024
- Notice: Restored supply of Benzathine benzylpenicillin Injection – 31 May 2024
- Erratum to the Adult Hospital Level and Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List, 2019, 5th Edition: Vitamin D dosing – 20 May 2024
- Notice: Cytarabine Injection for Intrathecal use – 10 May 2024
- Notice: Republication of the National Essential Medicines List (NEMLC) approved updates to the Adult Hospital Level Obstetrics Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) (2020 to 2023 review) – 10 May 2024
- Notice: Availability of insulin pen sets – 06 May 2024 (developed by Affordable Medicines Directorate)

EVOLUTION OF THE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST (EML) REVIEW PROCESS AND PRIORITISATION

- The Terms of Reference of NEMLC allow for the establishment of subcommittees. The following two subcommittees have been established, both reporting directly to NEMLC:
- *Asthma Subcommittee:* The remit of this Committee will be to progress work on two outstanding PICOS for the management of asthma.
- *Endocrine Subcommittee:* The remit of this Committee will be to initially conduct a cross-level review for DPP4 inhibitors and SGLT2 inhibitors after which the endocrine/diabetes mellitus space as a whole will be explored.

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE (PHC) AND ADULT HOSPITAL (AH) LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

- The following chapters have been reviewed and *ratified for publication*, with the respective NEMLC reports and relevant medicine review(s), following clinical editing:
 - PHC Level
 - **PHC Chapter 6: Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Updated)**
 - **PHC Chapter 17: Respiratory**
 - **PHC Chapter 18: Eye**
 - **PHC: How to use these Guidelines**
 - AH Level
 - **AH Chapter 5: Gynaecology - published**
 - **AH Chapter 9: Systemic and Healthcare Associated Infections – published**
 - **AH Chapter 16: Respiratory**
 - **AH Chapter 18: Eye**
 - **AH Chapter 19: Poisoning - published**
 - **Appendix II: Prescribing information for specific medicines - published**

- The following items were reviewed by NEMLC:
 - **Isoniazid Preventative Therapy (IPT) in Pregnancy** – In response to a query received on the use of IPT in pregnancy, the NEMLC confirmed, that in accordance with the updated evidence review¹ and previous risk: benefit deliberations on the use of IPT in pregnancy, IPT should be discontinued in all pregnant patients. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that for women who experienced an interruption to their 12 month course of therapy due to pregnancy, that the full 12 month course of treatment be re-initiated after pregnancy. These recommendations will be reflected in the updated HIV chapters.
 - **Calcium carbonate STG dose wording in relation to elemental calcium** – NEMLC deliberated a proposal to align and provide better clarity for the STG dosing recommendation for calcium supplementation in the PHC CH: Obstetrics & Gynaecology, AH CH: Gynaecology and AH Ch: Nephrological/Urological Disorders to avoid possible dosing errors. NEMLC supported the recommendation that the relevant STG dose wording be amended to only include the elemental calcium supplementation requirements i.e., not the calcium carbonate salt dose, in the respective chapters.
 - **GTN IV administration guidance** – Following the inclusion of a Section 21 formulation of on the EML, guidance on the dilution and administration of GTN IV, has been updated to include both 1mg/mL and 5mg/mL formulations, based on availability. The changes will be reflected in both the CH 20 AH Emergencies and Injuries and CH 3 Cardiovascular chapters.
 - **Vitamin D dose for primary prevention of hip fractures** – NEMLC deliberated that in the AHL chapter 8: Endocrine Disorders, the STG recommended dose of vitamin D (Calciferol) 50 000 IU weekly is higher and outside the recommendation of the South African Medicines Formulary (SAMF) recommendations and other guidelines. NEMLC also considered that high intermittent doses of vitamin D have been associated with increased risk of falls in the elderly. NEMLC ratified the STG amendment to AHL chapter 8: Endocrine Disorders, recommending vitamin D (Calciferol) 50 000 IU every 4 weeks for the primary prevention of hip fractures. An erratum was published on the NDoH Knowledge Hub and NHI webpages on 22 May 2024.
 - **Benzathine benzylpenicillin injection (stock availability)** – The Contract Management Unit of the Affordable Medicines Directorate has advised that the historical supply challenges regarding benzathine

¹ NDoH Evidence review: IPT in pregnancy_v1.2_15 April 2024.

benzylpenicillin injection have been resolved and that the national demand for benzathine benzylpenicillin injection can currently be met. Considering this, NEMLC recommended that the STG be updated to remove the restriction of benzathine benzylpenicillin to only pregnant women and children in the PHC chapter 12: Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). A circular reflecting this change was published on the NDoH Knowledge Hub and NHI webpages on 06 June 2024.

- **Initiation of Aspirin at Primary Healthcare level for reducing the risk of early onset pre-eclampsia in women with risk factors** – An evidence summary for the initiation of aspirin at PHC level for reducing the risk of early onset pre-eclampsia in women with risk factors was presented to NEMLC. The Committee ratified the evidence summary, presented by the PHC and Adult Hospital Level ERC, with the recommendation that aspirin 150mg oral be recommended, until 36 weeks of pregnancy, for prevention of pre-eclampsia for all levels of care.
- **Publication Layout:** A proposal was made to remove the index of conditions and medicines from the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML as currently, all finalised chapters are electronically published in pdf format and sections to the STGs and EML can therefore be searched electronically. This was accepted by NEMLC, and the change will be reflected in the 2024 editions of the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML.

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

- The updated complete Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML, 2023 edition, updated December 2023 (plus individual chapters updated and ratified by NEMLC in December 2023) is available for download on the Knowledge Hub platform's eLibrary on this link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/elibrary/hospital-level-paediatric-standard-treatment-guidelines-stgs-and-essential-medicines-list> and the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>
- Presentations from the Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML 2023 edition launch webinar series (held in September 2023) can be found on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab or on the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>.

TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY HOSPITAL LEVEL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

- The following items were reviewed by NEMLC:
 - **Adalimumab and infliximab in individuals with luminal Crohn's Disease refractory to conventional therapy** – The medicine review for the PICO relating to Luminal/Non-specific Crohn's Disease was presented to NEMLC. For Luminal/Non-specific Crohn's Disease refractory to conventional therapy, NEMLC recommended that adalimumab be the preferred agent due to price, favourable subcutaneous administration, and less infusion related adverse effects. It was also recommended that infliximab be made available as antibody development does occur. The Committee recommended that the annexure document developed for guiding use of adalimumab and infliximab in fistulising Crohn's Disease be expanded to incorporate luminal Crohn's Disease.
 - **Third line Schizophrenia** – The reviews for quetiapine and aripiprazole in the third-line schizophrenia were shared for discussion with NEMLC. Based on the reviews, quetiapine was not recommended for inclusion in the management of third-line schizophrenia, as it is similar in terms of efficacy outcomes compared to aripiprazole and amisulpride, however it is inferior to aripiprazole and amisulpride in terms of adverse effects. It was recommended that aripiprazole be included for the management of third-line schizophrenia, as a step before amisulpride. A schizophrenia treatment algorithm has been developed and approved by NEMLC to outline the care steps from PHC to a higher level of care.
 - **Ulcerative Colitis** – It was identified by the Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level ERC that there are currently no medicine recommendations for conventional/standard of care therapy in ulcerative colitis.

The Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML STGs recommends referral to a specialist for this indication. Conventional therapies: azathioprine, sulfasalazine and rectal mesalazine were included in the 2012 Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML but not included in the updated 2015 edition with no addition to the tertiary space. NEMLC approved the inclusion of these historically accepted use agents.

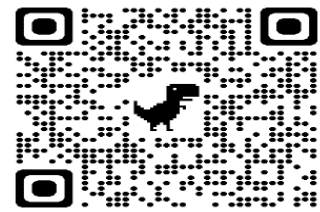
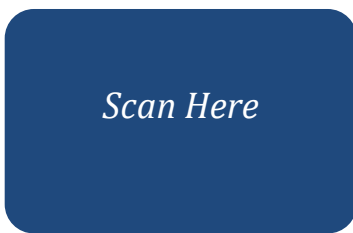
Final reviews and supporting technical documents are published on the following links: Knowledge Hub's eLibrary: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/elibrary/hospital-level-tertiary-quaternary-medicine-recommendations-medicine-reviews-and-costing> and the NHI website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

OTHER MATTERS

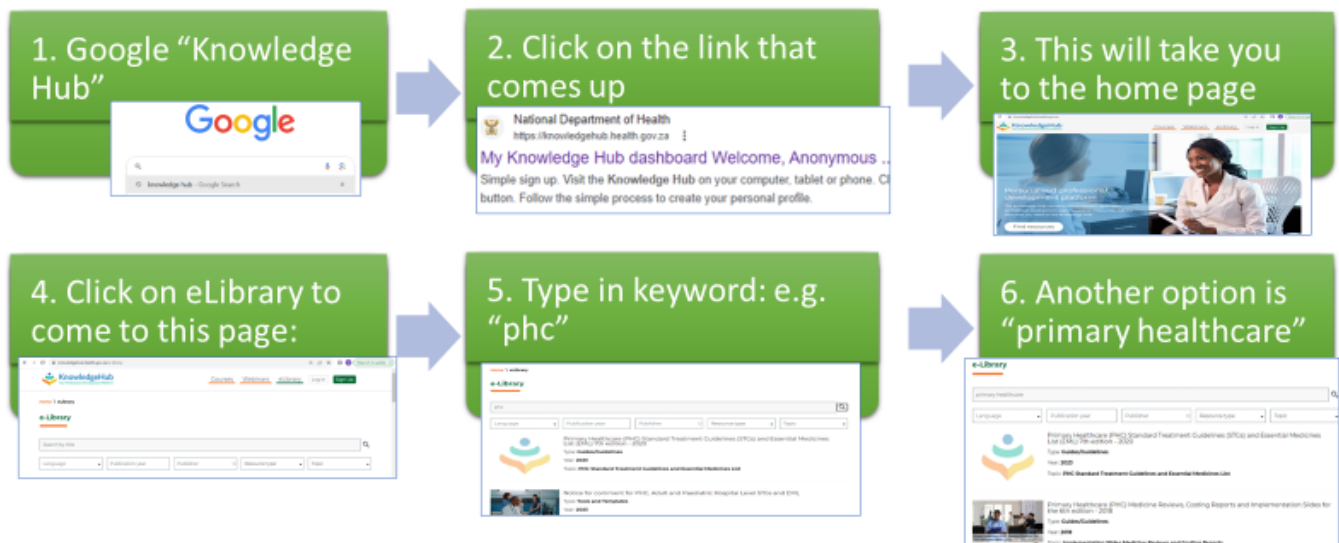
The following items were discussed by NEMLC:

- **PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML Webinar Series** - A series of webinars will be held showcasing the Health Technology Assessment process and the chapters that have been published for this review cycle. The first webinar highlighting Health Technology Assessment, is scheduled for the 25th of June 2024 from 13:00 – 14:30 (*Invitation attached*).

Guide on how to access the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List and related technical documents on Knowledge Hub

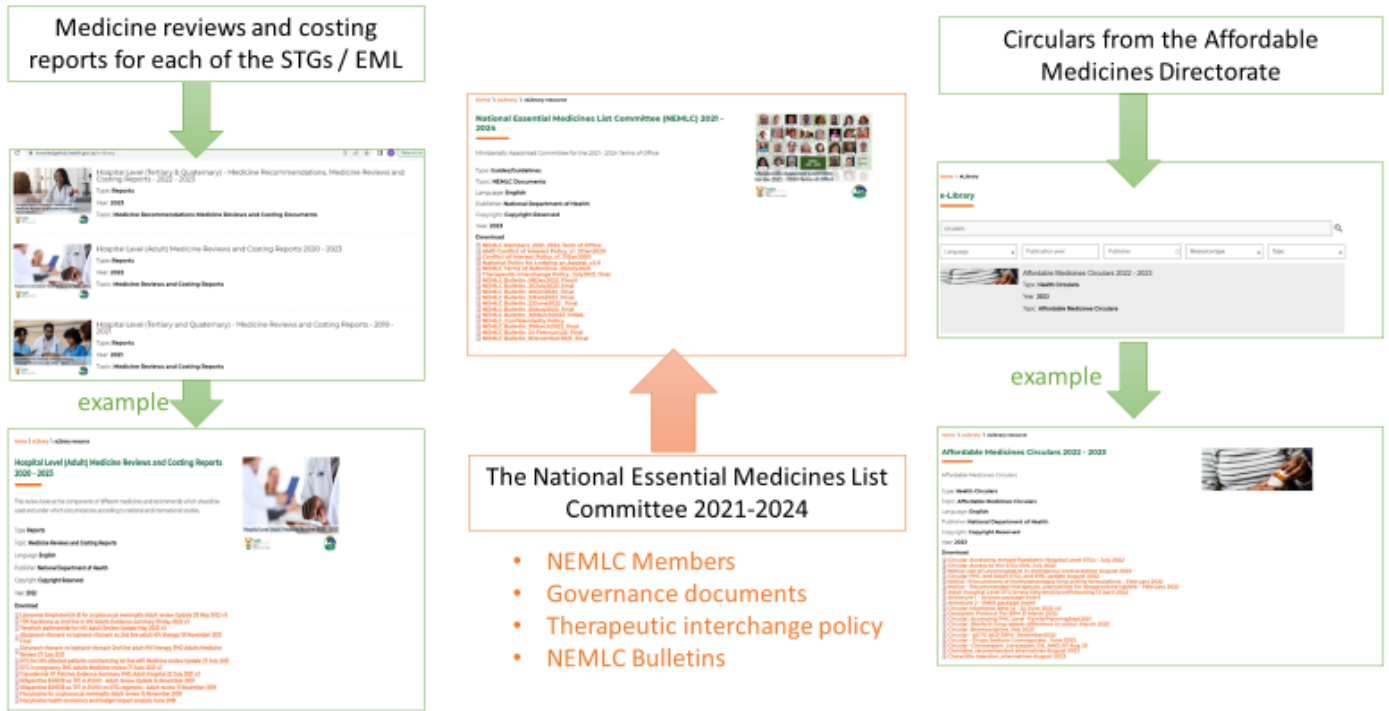


OR



Other keywords that you can use:
'hospital level'; 'paediatric'; 'adult'; 'tertiary';
'notice for comment'

What else is available on KnowledgeHub?



How the STGs/EML are presented on KnowledgeHub

