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| **Propanolol Safety Alert**  **July 2023** |

What this bulletin is about: **Medicines Update**: Risks of propranolol prescribing for anxiety

Who it is being sent to: All Clinical Teams

Action required by you: Please cascade to relevant staff in your area or staff without regular access to email as soon as possible.

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| **Risks with Propranolol in Overdose** |

Propranolol is widely used, however, the evidence for use in anxiety is slim and the risks underestimated. Propranolol is toxic in overdose, deterioration can be rapid and occur before medical assistance is available. NICE does not recommend propranolol for [generalised anxiety disorder and panic disorder in adults (CG113)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg113), there are other safer and more effective options.

Please watch this podcast from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, it is very informative and is applicable locally. In the podcast Juliet Shepherd, Lead Pharmacist for Mental Health in Herefordshire discusses the issue with a GP colleague, giving more details of the issues and advice on how prescribers can reduce the risks.

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[Prescribing in anxiety (vimeo.com)](https://vimeo.com/768227467/cdcb2289ca)

**Key messages**

* If you are supporting patients who are currently on propranolol, the indication should be reviewed by the prescribing clinician. Note: Propranolol may be used for other conditions e.g. migraine.
* If you or a family member are currently taking propranolol for anxiety and you have concerns, this should be discussed with the prescribing clinician at the next routine review.
* If discontinuation is required, this should be undertaken gradually. Patients should be encouraged to safely dispose of any propranolol tablets if they are no longer required as advised in this [Prevention of Future Deaths (regulation 28) report](https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Aoife-McAdam-Prevention-of-future-deaths-report-2023-0107_Published.pdf) from March 2023.
* The full Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch report can be viewed here: [Potential under-recognised risk of harm from the use of propranolol — HSIB](https://www.hsib.org.uk/investigations-and-reports/potential-under-recognised-risk-of-harm-from-the-use-of-propranolol/)
* Further information about risks of propranolol in overdose can be found at[TOXBASE - poisons information database](https://www.toxbase.org/).

**For further information, please contact:**

* Your local mental health pharmacist
* penninecare.medsinfo@nhs.net

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