

Kent and Medway Joint Prescribing Committee Position Statement ARMOUR THYROID and other unlicensed desiccated thyroid extract products

Armour Thyroid and other unlicensed desiccated thyroid extract products are NOT recommended for prescribing on FP10 in Kent and Medway.

Patients currently being prescribed Armour Thyroid or other desiccated thyroid extract products should be reviewed by an NHS Consultant Endocrinologist and a switch to levothyroxine considered. The withdrawal or adjustment of treatment should only be undertaken by, or with oversight of, an NHS consultant endocrinologist.

- **The RMOG Guidance- Prescribing of Liothyronine June 2019 states: “Thyroid extracts (e.g. Armour thyroid, ERFA Thyroid), compounded thyroid hormones, iodine containing preparations and dietary supplementation are not recommended. The prescribing of unlicensed liothyronine and thyroid extract products are not supported as the safety, quality and efficacy of these products cannot be assured.”¹**
- Desiccated thyroid extract is derived from porcine thyroid gland.²
- Products such as Armour Thyroid, which contain thyroid extract, are NOT licensed in the UK.²
- These products are licensed in the USA, but because they have not been approved by the FDA as a new drug, they have not been subjected to clinical effectiveness studies.²
- NICE guidance states: “Do not offer natural thyroid extract for primary hypothyroidism because there is not enough evidence that it offers benefits over levothyroxine, and its long-term adverse effects are uncertain.”³
- Armour Thyroid is included in the NHS England “Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care” list.⁴
- British Thyroid Association Executive Committee statement: “There is no convincing evidence to support routine use of thyroid extracts, L-T3 monotherapy, compounded thyroid hormones, iodine containing preparations, dietary supplementation and over the counter preparations in the management of hypothyroidism”.⁵
- Armour Thyroid is not eligible to be claimed on the prescription exemption certificate (FP10).

References:

1. Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee. Guidance-Prescribing of Liothyronine. June 2019. <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/RMOG-Liothyronine-guidance-V2.6-final-1.pdf> . Accessed 03.06.2020.
2. UKMi . What clinical evidence is there to support the use of desiccated thyroid extract products. Nov 2018. <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/what-clinical-evidence-is-there-to-support-the-use-of-desiccated-thyroid-extract/> . Accessed 03.06.2020.

3. NICE. NG145 Nice Guideline. Thyroid Disease: assessment and management. 20th Nov 2019. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng145/chapter/Recommendations#managing-primary-hypothyroidism>. Accessed 03.06.2020.
4. NHS England. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs Version 2, June 2019 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-v2.1.pdf> . Accessed 03.06.2020.
5. Management of primary hypothyroidism: statement by the British Thyroid Association Executive Committee. 2015. https://www.british-thyroid-association.org/sandbox/bta2016/bta_statement_on_the_management_of_primary_hypothyroidism.pdf. Accessed 03.06.2020.