

## Medicines derived from animal products

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

### Which medicines contain animal products?

Many medicines contain ingredients derived from animals. This may be in tiny quantities but still have implications for some people for religious, dietary or philosophical / ethical reasons. These are some examples:

- Heparin type medicines to prevent or treat blood clots
- Some insulins
- Pancreatic enzyme supplements
- Vaccines
- Non-active ingredients used in the manufacture of medicines (e.g. gelatin capsules, some colourants, lactose, lanolin)
- Treatments to help the lungs of pre-term babies to develop

### Are there any alternatives?

To check the availability of animal product free medicine, please ask a member of staff as soon as possible. Your doctor, nurse or midwife can ask our pharmacists if there are any alternatives.

If you are unsure about any medicine on religious grounds, do seek further advice from your religious leader. Research has found that exceptions can be made for medical reasons (see references below).

Please do not stop taking prescribed medicine without discussing this with your medical practitioner first. This could pose a risk to your health.

### Where can I find more information?

For further information on whether your medicine contains animal products, you could try looking at the product information which comes with each medicine, or try a website such as [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk). If you are unable to find the information you need, your medical practitioner can try to find out for you.

## References

Eriksson A, Burcharth J, Rosenberg G (2013) Animal derived products may conflict with religious patients' beliefs *BMC Medical Ethics* 14:48 available at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4220589/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4220589/) (accessed 15.01.2017)

Newson AJ (2010) Clinical ethics committee case 9: Should we inform our patients about animal products in medicine? *Clinical Ethics* 5:1 (7-12) available at <https://doi.org/10.1258/ce.2009.009043> (accessed 06.02.2020)

UK Medicines Information: Excipients: What are the general considerations for vegan patients? Available at: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/excipients-what-are-the-general-considerations-for-vegan-patients/> (accessed 06.02.2020)

UK Medicines Information: What factors to consider when advising on medicines suitable for a Halal diet? Available at: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/how-can-i-find-out-if-medicines-may-be-considered-okoshero-or-ohalalo/> (accessed 06.02.2020)

### **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

### **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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