

Oral semaglutide for the treatment of type 2 diabetes

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

The routine commissioning of oral semaglutide is accepted in Devon for patients with type 2 diabetes who are suitable for treatment with a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) mimetic, as described in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline NG28, but for whom injectable therapy is not suitable. The Formulary Interface Group should include this in locally defined treatment recommendations.

Rationale for the decision

Semaglutide is the first glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist available as an oral preparation. It is now available as a subcutaneous injection (Ozempic®) or oral tablet (Rybelsus®). All other GLP-1 receptor agonists are only available as subcutaneous injections.

The bioavailability of oral semaglutide is highly variable. To aid absorption patients are required to strictly adhere to the administration directions, taking the tablet on an empty stomach 30 minutes before eating, drinking or taking other oral medicines.

Oral semaglutide has been found to be non-inferior in reducing HbA1c in comparison to a different subcutaneously administered GLP-1 receptor agonist. Robust comparison of clinical effectiveness compared to subcutaneously administered semaglutide is lacking.

A trial of cardiovascular safety was unable to demonstrate oral semaglutide was superior to placebo in the prevention of cardiovascular events. The subcutaneous preparation of semaglutide has demonstrated superiority over placebo for this outcome.

Concerns over variable bioavailability and the absence of proven cardiovascular superiority limit the appropriateness of oral semaglutide as a first line treatment option. However, it may provide a treatment option for patients who are suitable for treatment with a GLP-1 mimetic but for whom injectable therapy is not suitable.

Guidance notes on exceptionality

This general policy does not replace clinical judgement on the appropriate treatment of an individual patient.

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