

NCPCT22

24 April 2008

Manage your medicines and reduce wastage

The local NHS is urging everyone to join in the effort to reduce the amount of medicines that are wasted each year.

Nottingham City Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Nottinghamshire County Teaching PCT are taking part in a regional campaign, launching on Monday 28 April, to promote the message that wasted medicines cost money that could be spent elsewhere in the health service.

Unused medicines cost the NHS millions each year – including £2 million in Nottingham City and £5 million in the rest of the county.

One of the main areas of wastage is medicines on repeat prescriptions, which are ordered and collected by patients but are then not used. Once medicines have been dispensed they cannot be recycled and have to be thrown away – whether they have been used or not.

Patients are encouraged to review their prescriptions and only order what they need. If they are unsure about what they need, patients can get advice from their pharmacist or prescribing doctor to review and discuss their medication requirements.

Samantha Travis, Senior Pharmacist, of Nottingham Primary Care Trust said: “We are constantly looking at ways to deliver better and more effective patient care. Unwanted drugs in the home may mean that patients are not getting the benefit they could from their medicines. Also, there is a risk to patients’ health if they are continuing to take medication which is no longer required, or which could cause a dangerous reaction if taken with other prescribed drugs.

"Wasted medicines mean wasted money. If through this campaign we can save some of that money, it can be reinvested in other areas of healthcare to benefit more patients."

Cathy Quinn, Chief Pharmacist for Nottinghamshire County Teaching PCT said: "Medicines are used widely in health treatments, but the high volume of wasted medicines tells us that they are not always used as intended. We are therefore looking at new ways to deliver better medicines management services to our local population.

"We hope the waste campaign will raise public awareness about the risks associated with unused medicines and aim to follow this up with a varied programme of activity working with patient groups, general practice and community pharmacies."

The campaign will also aim to raise awareness of the dangers of having unused medicines lying around at home. This may be a significant danger, particularly if there are young children present.

Brendon Jiang, Pharmacy Manager of Boots, Victoria Centre said: "If anyone has any unused medicines at home we're encouraging them to take them back to the pharmacy for safe disposal. Please do not return unused medicines to your GP practice."

Posters advertising the campaign will be displayed on buses and bus shelters across Nottinghamshire. Further information, posters and leaflets will also be available in GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Further details of the campaign can be found by visiting - www.medicinewaste-eastmidlands.com.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

Drug wastage was one of the key elements highlighted in the National Audit Office report 'Prescribing costs in primary care', published 18 May 2007. Using the Department of Health's own estimations, as much as 10 per cent of all drugs prescribed are wasted – this means up to £800 million-worth of drugs are wasted nationally each year in primary careⁱ

¹ Department of Health, *Management of Medicines: A resource to support implementation of the wider aspects of medicines management for the National Service Frameworks for Diabetes, Renal Services and Long Term Conditions*, July 2004

Issued by: Nottingham City Primary Care Trust and Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust

For further information or interviews, please contact:

Suzanne Aitken, Communications and Marketing Officer

Phone: 0115 912 3384

Fax: 0115 912 3302

Email: Suzanne.aitken@nottinghamcity-pct.nhs.uk

For urgent media inquiries out of office hours, mobile: 07980 625424

Visit the website at www.nottinghamcity-pct.nhs.uk

Or Rachael Earp, Communications Manager

Phone 01623 414114 ext 4572

Email: Rachael.earp@nottspct.nhs.uk
