



Re: your treatment with SGLT2 inhibitor (Dapagliflozin, Empagliflozin, Canagliflozin)

We have contacted you as part of our efforts to ensure safe and effective prescribing whilst being responsible with NHS resources. You do not need to contact us regarding this letter, this is for information only.

You have received this letter as it appears you take a medication called an SGLT2 Inhibitor. Examples of SGLT2 inhibitors are Dapagliflozin, Empagliflozin or Canagliflozin. We prescribe SGLT2 inhibitors for several reasons:

- To improve diabetic control, protect heart and protect kidney in patients with diabetes
- To protect the heart in patients with heart failure
- To protect the kidney in patients with chronic kidney disease

They have shown to be excellent medicines at doing the jobs above and therefore the number of patients we prescribe them for has increased significantly over recent years.

Whilst very beneficial, sometimes medications can have side effects. We would like to draw your attention to three potential risks associated with the use of SGLT2 inhibitors, so you can continue taking them safely, in the knowledge of what action to take if these were to occur:

1. “Sick day rule”

SGLT-2 inhibitors can act as a weak diuretic or “water tablet” thus increasing the amount of urine produced. This is not a problem if we are able to eat and drink normally, because we are able to replace the lost fluids with food and drink. However, if you become unwell and you are unable to eat and drink normally, there is a risk that you might become dehydrated if you continue taking your SGLT2 Inhibitor. We would therefore advise that if you were to find yourself in that situation, you stop taking your SGLT2 inhibitor until being able to eat and drink normally again. You can restart the medications as soon as you are better but, if you remain unwell after 48 hours, seek medical advice.

2. Increased risk of diabetic ketoacidosis (affects less than 1 in 1,000 patients)

On rare occasions, treatment with this medication can raise the levels of certain chemicals, called ketones, in your blood. This can lead to a serious condition called diabetic ketoacidosis.

Contact your doctor straightaway if you notice any combination of the following symptoms:

- A sweet smell to your breath, a sweet or metallic taste in your mouth or a different smell to your sweat or urine.
- Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting), tummy (abdominal) pains.
- Losing weight quickly, feeling very thirsty, breathing unusually quickly or difficulty breathing.
- Newly and quickly developing confusion, tiredness or sleepiness.

3. Increased risk of developing Fournier's gangrene (less than 1 in 10,000 – might be as little as 1 in 100,000 – it is so rare that there is no absolute certainty of how often it happens)

Fournier's gangrene is an extremely rare but potentially life-threatening bacterial infection of the tissue under the skin that surrounds muscles, nerves, fat, and blood vessels around the genital area. It affects the testicles, penis, and the perineum which is the area between the scrotum and anus for a man or the area between the anus and vulva for a woman.

Without prompt treatment, the infection could spread and become fatal. It is therefore very important that you seek urgent medical advice if you were to develop tenderness, redness, or swelling of the genitals or the area from the genitals back to the rectum and have a fever above 38C (104 F) or a general feeling of being unwell.

More information about these medications, including these side effects as well as other less significant side effects, can be found via these links:

- On dapagliflozin: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/dapagliflozin/>
- On empagliflozin: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/empagliflozin/>
- On canagliflozin: <https://patient.info/medicine/canagliflozin>
- On SGLT2 in general: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/treating-your-diabetes/tablets-and-medication/sglt2-inhibitors>

REMEMBER: this medication has been prescribed for you because it can be very beneficial. Yes, like with any medication there are risks, but we feel the benefit of treatment far outweighs the risks. The aim of this letter is to warn you about these risks however our recommendation is that you continue treatment as normal.

Brough Surgery
4 Centurion Way
Brough
HU15 1AY
tel: 01482 668668
fax: 01482 665090

South Cave Surgery
67 Ferry Road
South Cave
HU15 2JG
tel: 01430 424764
fax: 01430 471810

Holme On Spalding Moor Surgery
Rush View
Holme On Spalding Moor
YO43 4BJ
tel: 01430 860221
fax: 01430 861389

Bubwith Surgery
Highfield Road
Bubwith
YO8 6LY
tel: 01757 288315
fax: 01757 289329

www.theridingsmedicalgroup.nhs.uk
 The Ridings Medical Group
 @RidingsMedical