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Mucolytics - Guidelines for use

• Mucolytics should be initiated on trial to thin mucosal secretions in respiratory tract disorders, characterised by excessive, viscous mucus, including COPD.

• Mucolytics should not be used routinely to prevent exacerbations in people with stable COPD.

• **Carbocisteine** 375mg capsules - Initial dose is 2.25g daily in divided doses (e.g. TWO capsules THREE times a day), reducing to 1.5g daily in divided doses (e.g. as ONE capsule FOUR times a day OR TWO capsules TWICE a day) as condition improves. (see flow chart below)

Do NOT prescribe carbocisteine 750mg capsules

• **Acetylcysteine** 600mg effervescent tablets - The dose is ONE effervescent tablet of 600mg once daily.

No dose reduction needed.

Can be considered to reduce the tablet burden of carbocisteine capsules or as alternative to carbocisteine oral solution.

Do NOT prescribe Acetylcysteine 600mg capsules or sachets

• Review all patients after 4 weeks of starting a mucolytic and opportunistically

- Stop treatment if no benefit is shown.
- Continue if there is symptomatic improvement (for example reduction in frequency of cough and sputum production).

• Prescribing should be reviewed within limits of SPC dosage and amended to adhere to this.

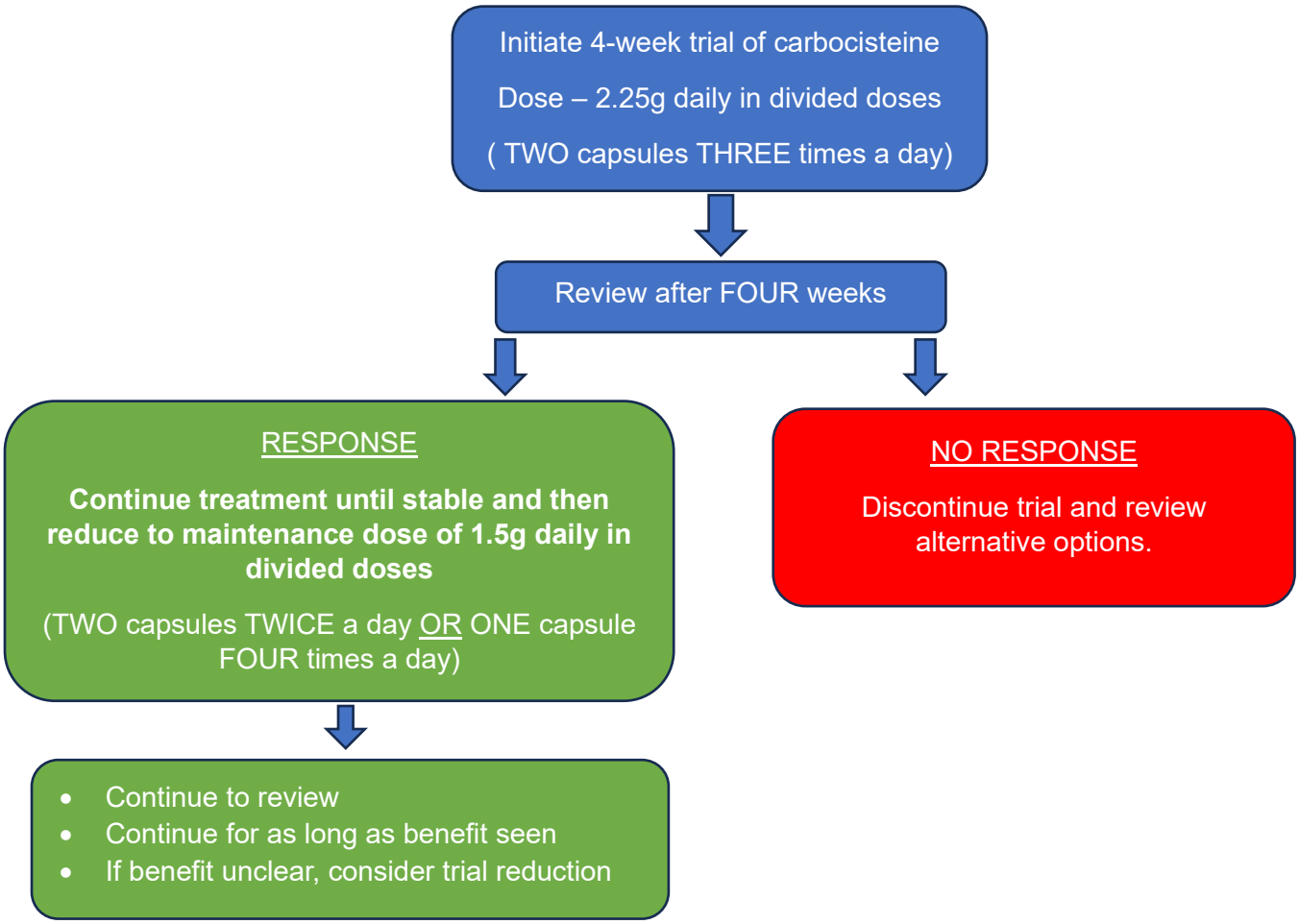
Patient Counselling

- Stay well hydrated. Phlegm is largely made up of water and good fluid intake will make it less sticky and easier to clear.
- Stay active and move around regularly. When sitting still breathing becomes shallower and phlegm is less likely to be easily cleared from the lungs.

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Stepping down of carbocisteine



References

• Summary of Product Characteristics. Carbocisteine 375mg Capsules. Last updated 8/4/22. Available at Carbocisteine 375 mg Capsules - Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) - (emc) (medicines.org.uk). Last accessed 4/9/24.

• Acetylcysteine | Drugs | BNF | NICE. Last accessed 4/9/24

• NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: Mucolytics. Last updated 09/23. Available at Mucolytics | Prescribing information | Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease | CKS | NICE. Last accessed 4/9/24.

• Carbocisteine and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).pdf (uhcw.nhs.uk) Last accessed 4/9/24.

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