

Covid-19

----- Guidance for practices



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Please be aware that this is a rapidly evolving situation.

Medicines management and monitoring for mental health

Continued treatment with commonly prescribed psychotropic drugs

- [Guidance from the Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) cautions against any change in a patient's current regime during the Covid-19 pandemic. The guidance states that careful consideration should be given to whether now is the best the time to withdraw or change patients from antidepressant, anxiolytic or antipsychotic medication. In some circumstances this may be unavoidable due to clinical need, but the clinical rationale should be carefully documented and arrangements for monitoring put in place.
- For many patients the most sensible advice will be to continue regular medication until this can be reviewed in a face-to-face setting and the patient can be involved in shared decision making with their usual doctor or healthcare provider. This should take account of the fact that anxiety, depressive and psychotic symptoms are all likely to worsen during extreme stress and social disruption. Patients will be at increased risk of relapse or recurrence of affective and psychotic illness.
- Advise patients to continue their current dosage until the changes in healthcare provision necessary during the Covid-19 outbreak have been reversed, and only then consider whether dosage reductions or withdrawal might be appropriate, in discussion with their usual doctors.

Medicines monitoring guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic

The SPS website has specific guidance on monitoring requirements for the following medications:

1. [Lithium monitoring](#).
2. [Clozapine prescribing and monitoring](#).

Key resources on clozapine

- [Clozapine and blood dyscrasias in patients with coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#).
- [Clozapine - emergency protocol for patients on monthly monitoring](#).

Long acting antipsychotic Depots

Most long acting antipsychotic depots (depots) are administered by the community mental health teams but for the small number of GP practices who administer depots as part of an enhanced service; the RCPsych has [published guidance on management of patients on long acting antipsychotics during Covid](#).