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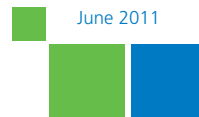
Important information about **gamolenic acid**

also known as **evening primrose oil**

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This leaflet explains why the NHS
North of Tyne is stopping the
prescription of gamolenic acid for
the treatment of eczema or period
(menstruation) related breast pain.

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What is gamolenic acid?

Gamolenic acid is a fatty acid found primarily in vegetable oils and is often more commonly referred to as **evening primrose oil**. Some people take gamolenic acid as a food supplement to increase the levels that they have in their body.

There are various gamolenic acid products available over the counter from community pharmacies, health food shops and other retail outlets such as supermarkets.

However, the quality of these food supplement products can vary because there are no statutory regulations regarding their purity and content.

Why can't I get gamolenic acid from my GP anymore?

The NHS needs to make sure that it makes the best possible use of the funding it receives so that it can continue to invest in new services and treatments to benefit patients.

In 2002 the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA), which is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines work and are safe, said that there was not enough clinical evidence for gamolenic acid to be classed as a medicine.

As a result the NHS has removed it from the list of medicines that GPs can prescribe.

Can I still use gamolenic acid?

The MHRA did not find any clinical evidence to suggest that gamolenic acid was an effective treatment for eczema or menstrual related breast pain. However, you may still choose to buy gamolenic acid as a food supplement. Ask your local community pharmacist for advice on a suitable product.

How safe is gamolenic acid?

Patients with particular health conditions should always seek medical advice before taking health supplements.

Gamolenic acid is likely to be safe for most people but it may interact with some drugs such as those used to slow blood clotting (anticoagulants and antiplatelet drugs).

It can sometimes cause mild side effects such as upset stomach and headache. It is not recommended for use in pregnancy.

Key points

Gamolenic acid will no longer be prescribed on the NHS. This is because there is no clinical evidence to show that it works as a treatment for eczema or period related breast pain.

Gamolenic acid may interact with other medicines you may already be taking or affect some medical conditions. You should always seek advice from your community pharmacist if you are considering using gamolenic acid.

