

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate release

17 July 2006

NEW AND IMPROVED CHILDREN'S MEDICINE HANDBOOK PUBLISHED

2006 Edition of BNF for Children Now Available

The 2006 edition of the *British National Formulary for Children* has just been published. Launched in 2005, *BNF for Children (BNFC)* is widely used by GPs, paediatricians, neonatologists, pharmacists, dentists and nurses to address the complex needs relating to the treatment of neonates, children and adolescents.

The new edition provides reliable and updated information on children's medicines to support prescribing decisions that ensure children receive the best medicines for their individual condition.

This week, approximately 200,000 NHS healthcare professionals will start receiving copies of the *BNFC*, which includes free online access. A study involving 995 users of the first edition revealed that 95% of respondents had used the *BNFC* for 'specific drug information,' while nearly half of them had used it for 'management of a condition.' Comments from respondents included: "excellent... long awaited... brilliant..."

Andy Burnham, Minister of State at the Department of Health, said: "For the second year we are investing in making this important resource available throughout the NHS. It will be enormously useful in all parts of the service. I would particularly commend it to those working in primary care. This is vital information for all those who are using medicines with children; it isn't just a resource for specialists, far from it. It gives health professionals excellent advice on using licensed and unlicensed medicines to provide the best possible care for children."

Dosing guidance in *BNFC* covers children from birth up to 18 years, and provides hands-on information on prescribing, monitoring, dispensing, and administering medicines. Reliable advice on unlicensed drugs is included, as is practical guidance on prescription writing and the reporting of adverse drug reactions. Numerous changes for this edition have been made, and emerging new information has been included.

According to Dr. George Rylance, Chairman of the Paediatric Formulary Committee: "In its short lifetime, the *BNFC* has established itself as an authoritative and practical resource for primary, secondary and tertiary care. Its intention to provide all relevant available information 'at the fingertips' has been met through the paper and web-based versions. Users rely on its advice and praise its quality. As intended, children are and will continue to be, the beneficiaries of this annually updated important resource.

Dr. Patricia Hamilton, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health said: "This essential book, used every day by paediatricians, GPs, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals, contributes widely to patient safety. It means that users have easy access to the best available information for treating children and young people."

Dr Sheila Shribman, National Clinical Director for Children, Young People and Maternity Services said: "Ensuring that children and young people have access to safe, clinically effective medicines in appropriate formulations and that NHS staff have ready access to authoritative, updated, consistent information based on the best available evidence, to advise children, parents and carers on the use of medicines, is fundamental to quality health care. I was, therefore, very pleased to welcome the first edition of the *BNFC* and equally delighted to see publication of the new edition."

BNFC 2006 is also available on CD-ROM, in PDA version and, online via MedicinesComplete, an online subscription service providing access to some of the world's leading drug and healthcare references.

ENDS

For further information, please contact
RPS Publishing, the publishing organisation of the Royal
Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
(0)20 7572 2491

Notes to editors

The *BNF for Children* is a joint publication of the British Medical Association, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists' Group.

Healthcare practitioners in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who prescribe medicines to children should receive a copy from their appropriate Department of Health. Extra copies will be available for purchase by NHS staff or organisations. The *BNFC* will also be available to prescribers online.