The new BNF for Children—delivering the latest advice on recent health concerns

The fourth edition of the British National Formulary for Children (BNFC) arms health professionals with the information they need to tackle recent controversial health concerns in young people, including rising rates of teenage pregnancy and the increasing incidence of sexually transmitted infections.

Professor Martin Kendall, Chairman of the Formulary Development Committee, who was recently awarded an OBE for services to healthcare, said:

“This year, to protect children from cervical cancer, updated advice on human papilloma virus vaccine which will be offered to all girls aged 12–13 years from September has been included. Also, noting the national concerns about sexual activity in the young, BNFC 2008 has new sections on contraception and additional guidance on the treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The BNFC is the national guide on managing the diseases of today and protecting children and young people from the medical problems of tomorrow.

The BNFC has been extensively revised and updated, checked by national experts and improved by the comments of paediatricians, nurses, pharmacists and dentists who have been using it to help them treat children safely and effectively over the last four years.”

The new edition of the BNF for Children is published today by the BMJ Group, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group.

BNFC 2008 has been fully revised and improved. The changes include:

- Details of a new immunisation schedule for vaccination against the human papilloma virus
- Revised guidance on the treatment and prevention of urinary-tract infections
- New advice on the use of all forms of contraception, including emergency contraception
- A new section on the treatment of pelvic inflammatory disease to further expand the guidance on management of sexually transmitted infections
- More information on the administration of continuous IV infusions in neonatal intensive care to reduce medication errors when calculating infusion rates

The BNFC is available in print, on PDA and online. Further details about these and other changes can be found at http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/june/BNFC.pdf

Dr Patricia Hamilton, President, of the RCPCH comments: “The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is proud to be a partner in producing the BNF for Children which is an essential resource for paediatricians and other healthcare professionals.

We particularly highlight the new emphasis on adolescent health, with information in this edition on contraception, the treatment of sexually transmitted disease and a vaccination which protects against cervical cancer. The BNFC will also contribute to patient safety by ensuring users have the most up-to-date information and guarding against medication errors.”

Notes to editors:
Compiled with the advice of clinical experts, the BNF for Children provides up-to-date, authoritative, impartial, and where available evidence-based guidance on prescribing, dispensing and administering medicines for newborns (neonates), infants, children and adolescents. It is published annually and complements the BNF which is published twice a year.
The growing importance of *BNF for Children* is highlighted in research conducted by the independent research company Taylor Nelson Sofres in April/May 2007 on behalf of the publishers. The survey of just over 600 doctors, pharmacists, and nurses working in primary and secondary care shows that BNFC is the first resource that 74% of healthcare professionals turn to when seeking information about the use of medicines in children. 70% of healthcare professionals have become more aware of suitable treatments as a result of using BNFC while 40% believe that BNFC has changed their clinical practice. For just over half of the recipients, BNFC has reduced the number of times that they need to seek advice from other healthcare professionals. In the view of almost half the recipients, BNFC has led to an improvement in the quality of prescribing for children under shared care arrangements between primary and secondary care.