



MEDIA RELEASE

The Use of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs in patients with Covid-19

To: Healthcare Professionals and consumers

From: CEO of SAHPRA

Date: 25 March 2020

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) has become aware of reports on social media, which raise questions about whether non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, could worsen coronavirus disease (COVID-19) when used for the symptomatic treatment of pain and fever in patients suspected to have or with a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

SAHPRA is aware that some Medicines Regulatory Authorities have issued alerts to healthcare providers informing them not to use ibuprofen to treat fever or pain associated with COVID-19 infection.

Currently, there is insufficient evidence that NSAIDs may worsen COVID-19 infection. The SAHPRA-approved professional information and patient information leaflets for NSAIDs already indicate that their anti-inflammatory effects may mask the symptoms of infections, which could delay diagnosis.

In light of the available evidence, SAHPRA recommends that:

- Healthcare professionals follow current standard treatment guidelines regarding the symptomatic treatment of pain and fever in patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection. Unless it is contraindicated, paracetamol should be considered the first-line treatment option;
- NSAIDs should be used at the lowest effective dose and for the shortest period;
- Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection who are already on NSAIDs should seek advice from their doctor before stopping their medication.

SAHPRA is monitoring the situation closely and will review any new information that becomes available on this issue.

Healthcare professionals, consumers and patients are urged to report any adverse drug reactions (ADRs) or product quality issues to SAHPRA via the eReporting link available on the SAHPRA website (www.sahpra.org.za). Alternatively, please complete the ADR reporting form accessible via the SAHPRA website at <https://www.sahpra.org.za/documents/12e54dcaADRForms.pdf> and email it to adr@sahpra.org.za or fax to (021) 448 6181. For more information on ADR reporting, please call the SAHPRA vigilance unit on (012) 842 7609/10 or National Adverse Events Monitoring Centre (NADEMC) on (021) 447 1618.

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