


**NHS Grampian Staff Guidelines For The In-Hospital Management
Of Unstable Angina And Non-ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial
Infarction Patients (17 Years And Older)**

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Identifier: NHSG/Guid/NSTEMIacute/MGPG1025	Review Date: August 2024	Date Approved: August 2022
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Uncontrolled when printed

Version 4.1

Executive Sign-Off

This document has been endorsed by the Medical Director of NHS Grampian

Signature:  _____

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Title:	NHS Grampian Staff Guidelines For The In-Hospital Management Of Unstable Angina And Non-ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial Infarction Patients (17 Years And Older)
Unique Identifier:	NHSG/Guid/NSTEMIacute/MGPG1025
Replaces:	NHSG/Guid/NSTEMIacute/MGPG777, Version 3
Lead Author/Coordinator:	Specialist Clinical Pharmacist Cardiology
Subject (as per document registration categories):	Prescribing policy
Key word(s):	Acute Coronary Syndrome, ACS, angiogram, STEMI, NSTEMI, MI, myocardial infarction, non-ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarction, ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarction, cardiovascular disease, cardiology, percutaneous coronary intervention, PCI, stent, ticagrelor, aspirin, CCU, coronary care unit, fondaparinux, CABG, Coronary Artery Bypass Graft, triple therapy, clopidogrel
Process Document: Policy, Protocol, Procedure or Guideline	Guideline
Document application:	NHS Grampian Hospitals (including Community Hospitals)
Purpose/description:	This document highlights the recommendations for the initial treatment of in-hospital patients with a suspected ACS (Acute Coronary Syndrome) diagnosis across NHS Grampian.
Group/Individual responsible for this document:	Consultant Cardiologists
Responsibility:	Responsibility for the effective management of the Acute Sector's policy, protocol, procedure and process documentation ultimately lies with the General Manager for the Acute Sector. Delegation for formulating, disseminating and controlling these documents falls to either a named individual or a working group.
Policy statement:	It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are working to the most up to date and relevant policies, protocols procedures.

Responsibilities for ensuring registration of this document on the NHS Grampian Information/SharePoint: Pharmacist, Pharmacy and Medicines Directorate

Physical location of the original of this document: Pharmacy and Medicines Directorate, Westholme
 Job title of creator of this document: Specialist Clinical Pharmacist Cardiology
 Job/group title of those who have control over this document: Medicine Guidelines and Policies Group

Responsibilities for disseminating document as per distribution list:

Lead Author/Coordinator: Specialist Clinical Pharmacist Cardiology

Responsibilities for implementation:

Organisational: Operational Management Team and Chief Executive
 Sector: General Managers, Medical Leads and Nursing Leads
 Departmental: Clinical Leads
 Area: Line Manager

Review frequency and date of next review: This document should be reviewed every three years, or earlier if there is a clear indication for a change in practice.

Responsibilities for review of this document:

Lead Author/Coordinator: Specialist Clinical Pharmacist Cardiology

Revision History:

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes (Descriptive summary of the changes made)	Changes Marked* (Identify page numbers and section heading)
October 2022	-	Date approved amended.	Front page.
July 2022	January 2019	Updated to include information on unlicensed loading dose of clopidogrel.	2. In-Hospital Management Of Unstable Angina And Non-ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial Infarction

* Changes marked should detail the section(s) of the document that have been amended, i.e. page number and section heading.

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NHS Grampian Staff Guidelines For The In-Hospital Management Of Unstable Angina And Non-ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial Infarction Patients (17 Years And Older)

1. Introduction

This document details the suggested in-hospital pharmacological management of patients within NHS Grampian who present with a working diagnosis of unstable angina (UA) or non-ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI).

1.1 Objectives

To ensure the uniform pharmacological management of patients with a working diagnosis of UA/NSTEMI across NHS Grampian and maximise patient safety.

1.2 Clinical Situations

Patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of UA/NSTEMI, or presenting with a raised troponin result in keeping with a potential diagnosis of UA/NSTEMI.

1.3 Patient Groups to Which This Document Applies

This document applies to all patients in NHS Grampian who are 17 years of age or above and have a current working diagnosis of an UA/NSTEMI, unless any treatment is contraindicated. See relevant Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) [\(3.1\)](#) for each medicine.

1.4 Patient Groups to Which This Document Does Not Apply

This document does not apply to children (aged 16 and below) or those who have a contraindication to the suggested treatments, e.g. Creatinine Clearance (CrCl) <20mL/min. See relevant SmPC [\(3.1\)](#) for each medicine.

STEMI (ST-segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction) patients are not covered by this guideline and should be referred to the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) Decision Support or the cardiac cath lab for consideration of primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). If thrombolysis is appropriate to be administered (after discussion with a cardiologist) then dalteparin (**not** fondaparinux) should be used in these patients (please contact CCU for thrombolysis and dalteparin administration guidance).

2. In-Hospital Management Of Unstable Angina And Non-ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial Infarction

(Summarised in [Appendix 2](#): Flowchart: in-hospital management of UA/NSTEMI)

This guideline has been developed to clarify pharmacological management of UA and NSTEMI, with particular focus on the role of fondaparinux ([Appendix 1](#)) and ticagrelor, and it is applicable to all medical and surgical wards across NHS Grampian.

If a diagnosis of UA/NSTEMI is suspected, standard in-hospital treatment is immediate administration of dual antiplatelet therapy (aspirin plus ticagrelor) and parenteral anticoagulant therapy (dalteparin or fondaparinux). **Note:** If patient is established on an anticoagulant already (i.e. warfarin, dabigatran, apixaban, rivaroxaban or edoxaban), please seek guidance of senior medical staff before prescribing a parenteral agent (see below).

[The European Society of Cardiology Guideline \(ESC\) for Acute Coronary Syndromes \(ACS\) in Patients Presenting Without Persistent ST-segment Elevation \(Management of\) 2015](#) and the [Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network \(SIGN\) Guidance 148: Acute Coronary Syndromes](#) (April 2016) recommends that ticagrelor be used in preference to clopidogrel ([3.2, 3.3](#)) unless the risk (bleeding) outweighs the benefit (reduction in recurrent thrombotic events).

Ticagrelor belongs to a novel chemical class, cyclopentyl triazolopyrimidine and is an oral, reversibly binding P2Y₁₂ adenosine diphosphate receptor antagonist with a plasma half-life of 12 hours. Ticagrelor has a more rapid and consistent onset of action compared with clopidogrel, but additionally it has a quicker offset of action so that recovery of platelet function is faster ([3.2, 3.3](#)).

It should be noted that ticagrelor is not recommended in combination with anticoagulants, and patients who require an anticoagulant to continue post ACS should receive clopidogrel rather than ticagrelor ([3.3](#)). Careful consideration should be made to the continued use of dual antiplatelet treatment with an anticoagulant. This should only be done where the benefit outweighs the increased risk of bleeding and for the shortest duration possible. Guidance on appropriate duration of therapies in different situations can be found in the ESC Guidance, or advice sought from a cardiologist ([3.4](#)). If clopidogrel is deemed most suitable for use, a loading dose of at least 300mg, but ideally 600mg (note this dose is unlicensed but recommended), should be administered as a once only dose, then continued at 75mg once daily for the defined duration.

Fondaparinux ([Appendix 1](#)) is recommended in the current SIGN ([3.2](#)), European Society of Cardiology ([3.3](#)) and NICE ([3.5](#)) guidelines, and is associated with a lower risk of bleeding than low molecular weight heparins ([3.6](#)). All guidelines recommend that fondaparinux has the most favourable efficacy-safety profile for the management of ACS. It also has a simpler dosing regimen, 2.5mg given once daily regardless of the patient's weight.

It should be noted that fondaparinux cannot be used as a bridge for anticoagulants in those with active thrombus or at high risk of developing thrombi, and that recommendations on timing of initiation of parenteral anticoagulation vary dependent on the oral agents used (see individual SmPC for oral anticoagulant agents and/or discuss with pharmacy/senior medical staff). Dalteparin (or unfractionated heparin continuous infusion) may be preferred over fondaparinux in these situations. For dosing recommendations for dalteparin in NSTEMI/UA, see SmPC (<http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/26901>).

It is recommended that after a NSTEMI patients should receive up to 12 months of dual antiplatelet therapy (3.2), although there may be clinical reasons why a shorter duration is recommended (on the advice of a Consultant Cardiologist).

2.1. Pharmacological management of UA/NSTEMI patients not requiring emergency Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) < 120 minutes or Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) within 24hours

At initial presentation (unless contraindicated*):

- Aspirin 300mg once only (do **NOT** give if already administered in community).
- **PLUS** ticagrelor 180mg once only loading dose.
- Followed by ticagrelor 90mg twice daily. The second dose of ticagrelor (90mg) should be administered 6 to 18 hours after the loading dose.

and IF PATIENT NOT FOR URGENT PCI (PCI < 120minutes) OR CABG within 24hours:

- Fondaparinux 2.5mg subcutaneously (s/c)** also administered at initial presentation.

Continuing treatment (unless contraindicated*):

- Aspirin 75mg once daily to be continued indefinitely.
- Ticagrelor 90mg twice daily to continue for up to 1 year.
- Fondaparinux 2.5mg s/c once daily** at 6pm should be continued for up to a maximum of 8 doses in total. **Note:** fondaparinux should usually be stopped after successful revascularisation (PCI) unless otherwise directed by Cardiology Consultant.

*If a patient has a true hypersensitivity to aspirin, ticagrelor or fondaparinux, they should be discussed with the cardiologist on call. Other treatment should be administered as above.

**Note patients with body weight < 50kg are at increased risk of bleeding.

It should be noted that currently national advice requires that the ambulance paramedics administer 300mg of clopidogrel and 300mg of aspirin. These patients would then subsequently have to be loaded with ticagrelor on admission to hospital. The data from the PLATO study suggests that patients already loaded with clopidogrel are not at a higher risk of major and minor bleeding events if they then receive ticagrelor, compared to a patient who doesn't receive open label clopidogrel (3.7).

Consideration of secondary prevention (prescribe as appropriate):

- Atorvastatin 80mg once daily or a suitable statin of equivalent potency/maximum tolerated dose for the patient.
- Bisoprolol (dosing starts from 1.25mg once daily depending on clinical observations) and titrated as tolerated ([see BNF](#)) up to usual maximum dose of 10mg daily.
- Ramipril (dosing starts from 1.25mg once daily depending on clinical observations) and titrated as tolerated ([see BNF](#)) up to a maximum of 10mg daily (usually as 5mg twice daily).
- If patient has moderate or severe left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVSD) shown on echocardiogram, prescribers should also refer to the NHS Grampian Medical Treatment Guidelines for Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) due to Left Ventricular Systolic Dysfunction (LVSD) for additional recommendations.

For further information see References and Appendices.

3. References

- 3.1** SmPC for fondaparinux and ticagrelor– see <http://www.medicines.org.uk>
- 3.2** European Society of Cardiology Guidelines for the Management of Acute Coronary Syndromes in Patients Presenting Without Persistent ST Segment Elevation 2015
(<https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/article/37/3/267/2466099/2015-ESC-Guidelines-for-the-management-of-acute>)
- 3.3** SIGN 148: Acute Coronary Syndromes, April 2016 (<https://www.sign.ac.uk/sign-148-acute-coronary-syndrome.html>)
- 3.4** Valgimigli et al. 2017 ESC focused update on dual antiplatelet therapy in coronary artery disease developed in collaboration with EACTS: The Task Force for dual antiplatelet therapy in coronary artery disease of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and of the European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EACTS). *European Heart Journal*, Volume 39, Issue 3, 14 January 2018, Pages 213–260.
(<https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/article/39/3/213/4095043>)
- 3.5** NICE CG 94 (<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg94>)
- 3.6** The place of fondaparinux in the ESC and ACC/AHA guidelines for anticoagulation in patients with non-ST elevation acute coronary syndromes *European Heart Journal Supplements* (2008) 10 (Supplement C), C22–C29.
- 3.7** Becker et al. Bleeding complications with the P2Y12 receptor antagonists clopidogrel and ticagrelor in the PLATelet inhibition and patient Outcomes (PLATO) trial *European Heart Journal* (2011) 32, 2933–2944.

4. Consultation list

All NHS Grampian Cardiology Consultants (Dr A Hannah, Dr M J Metcalfe, Dr D Hogg, Dr A Stewart, Dr D Garg, Dr A Noman, Professor D Dawson, Dr A Dawson, Dr P Broadhurst, Dr J Affolter, Dr N Ryan, Dr C Dospinescu).

5. Distribution list

All Hospital Consultants, Nurse Managers, Clinical Pharmacists, Lead for Non-Medical Prescribers, Community Hospital Prescribers.

Appendix 1: Fondaparinux 2.5mg/0.5mL Solution For Injection

Also see SmPC - <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/29207>
Pre-filled syringe containing 2.5mg (0.5mL) of fondaparinux sodium.

Indication: Treatment of unstable angina or non-ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI) in patients for whom urgent (<120 minutes) invasive management (PCI) is not indicated.

Recommended dosage for adults:

2.5mg subcutaneously once daily at 6pm.

This should be discontinued if 12-hour troponin is negative.

Contraindications:

- Patient attending the cardiac catheterisation laboratory for urgent PCI.
- Patients with CrCl < 20mL/min. In these patients intravenous heparin infusion (25,000units in 50mLs) should be used and adjusted according to the activated partial thromboplastin time ratio (APTT_r) (see separate protocol).
- Hypersensitivity to fondaparinux or any excipients.
- The needle shield of the pre-filled syringe may contain dry natural latex rubber that has the potential to cause allergic reactions in latex sensitive individuals.
- NSTEMI patients to undergo CABG within 24 hours.
- Patients under the age of 17 years.
- Active signs of bleeding.
- Pregnancy or Lactation.

Cautions:

- Severe hepatic impairment.
- Patients with body weight < 50kg are at increased risk of bleeding.
- Patients with a history of heparin induced thrombocytopenia (HIT).
- Elderly/frail patients (increased bleeding risk).
- Patients with an increased risk of haemorrhage.
- Patients being treated concomitantly with any agents that may increase risk of haemorrhage (e.g. glycoprotein IIa/IIIb inhibitors or thrombolytics).

Administration:

Do not expel the air bubble prior to administration. Administer subcutaneously and ensure that the whole length of the needle is inserted perpendicularly into a skin fold between the thumb and forefinger.

Length of treatment:

Discontinue fondaparinux if 12-hour troponin is negative, following successful revascularisation, at discharge or after 8 doses whichever is sooner.

Side Effects:

- Bleeding (patient should be monitored for signs of bleeding).
- Increase in hepatic enzymes.
- Rash.
- Pruritis.
- Hypokalaemia.
- GI effects including nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation, abdominal pain.

Additional notes:

Contains less than 1mmol sodium per dose.

Not for intramuscular injection.

Appendix 2: Flowchart: In-Hospital Management Of Unstable Angina/NSTEMI

