Algorithm D: Pharmacological treatment of chronic asthma in children under 5

Suspected asthma in children under 5

For symptoms that indicate the need for maintenance therapy at presentation

For symptoms that do not indicate the need for maintenance therapy at presentation

Offer a SABA alone

If asthma is uncontrolled in 4 to 8 weeks:

Consider an 8-week trial of a paediatric moderate dose ICS

Offer paediatric low dose ICS

Offer paediatric low dose ICS with a SABA

Stop ICS after 8 weeks and review response

If symptoms resolved during the trial, but recurred within 4 weeks of stopping ICS

If symptoms resolved during the trial but recurred beyond 4 weeks after stopping ICS, repeat 8-week trial of a paediatric moderate dose ICS

Consider paediatric low dose ICS plus an LTRA

Consider paediatric low dose ICS plus an LTRA with a SABA

If asthma is uncontrolled in 4 to 8 weeks:

Stop LTRA but continue with paediatric low dose ICS

Stop LTRA but continue with paediatric low dose ICS with a SABA

If symptoms did not resolve during the trial, review whether an alternative diagnosis is likely

Stop LTRA but continue with paediatric low dose ICS

Refer to a healthcare professional with expertise in asthma for further investigation and management

Maintenance therapy

Symptom relief

Abbreviations:
ICS, inhaled corticosteroid
LABA, long-acting beta agonist
SABA, short-acting beta agonist

This algorithm is based on recommendations from NICE’s guideline on asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management (2017)

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