

Questions and answers about risk communication policy changes

The policy for sending Direct Healthcare Professional Communication (DHPC) and recall letters will change as of October 1, 2024. Marketing authorization holders currently send this risk communication by post to healthcare providers. From October, shipping will be done via e-mail.

The CBG is responsible for the policy regarding the DHPC. The IGJ has this responsibility for the recall letter. On the IGJ website, www.igj.nl/publicaties/vragen-en-antwoorden/veelgestelde-vragen-over-recallberichten you will find more information about the policy change for the recall letter. On this page we answer the most frequently asked questions about the digitalization of the DHPC.

About the policy change

What is going to change?

The policy for sending the DHPC and recall letter is changing. As of October 1, these will be sent digitally (by e-mail) instead of by post.

Why will this change?

There are several reasons for this change:

- Digital shipping is faster than postal mail. In many other European countries, shipping is therefore already digital.
- Sending DHPCs digitally is more sustainable.
- Healthcare providers indicate that they prefer to receive the DHPC digitally rather than by post. This is evident from research¹⁻².

What does this mean for me?

- As a healthcare provider: from now on you will receive the DHPC by e-mail. If no email address is known, you will continue to receive the DHPC by post. Do you want to receive the DHPC digitally? On the website of the Association of Innovative Medicines (VIG), <https://www.vereniginginnovatievegeneesmiddelen.nl/procedure-oranje-hand-envelop-en-witte-hand-envelop> you will find more information about receiving the DHPC digitally.
- As a company: changes the way of sending the DHPC. Information about what is changing for the company can be found on the VIG website,

<https://www.vereniginginnovatievegeneesmiddelen.nl/procedure-oranje-hand-envelop-en-witte-hand-envelop>.

When will the change take effect?

The policy change will take effect on October 1, 2024. From that moment on, DHPCs are sent digitally as much as possible.

About the digital DHPC

Who is the sender of the (digital) DHPC?

After the content, target groups and method of distribution of the DHPC have been agreed with the MEB and the IGJ, the companies are responsible for sending. The sender of the DHPCs will therefore be the company.

How do I recognize the digital DHPC?

The digital DHPC can be recognized by the Orange or White Hand, just like the DHPC by post. The hand icon will be included in both the email and the attached letter (PDF). In addition, the title of the digital message will contain the following elements:

'DHPC <name of medicine>: <brief explanation of what is going on>'

An example of a title: *'DHPC Topiramate: New measures for topiramate to prevent exposure during pregnancy'*

How to prevent a digital DHPC from ending up in unwanted emails (SPAM)?

Firms must use an email address that is not used for commercial purposes. This reduces the chance that the message will end up in unwanted emails.

Does sending of a DHPC by post completely disappear?

Postal mailing will not disappear completely. Healthcare providers for whom no email address is known will continue to receive the DHPC by post.

Will educational material (information leaflets, etc.) now also be sent digitally?

For the time being, you will continue to receive the educational material, including information leaflets about important additional information about medicines, by post in a White Hand Envelope.

Register for (digital) DHPC

How can I register for the digital DHPC?

If you currently receive DHPCs by post, you will automatically receive the DHPC digitally if your email address is known to the senders.

If you are not yet receiving DHPCs at all, you can go to the VIG website, <https://www.vereniginginnovatievegeneesmiddelen.nl/procedure-oranje-hand-envelop-en-witte-hand-envelop> to find more information about receiving the DHPC digitally.

Will my email address also be used for other purposes (e.g. advertising)?

It is not permitted to use the e-mail address for other purposes. Your email address will therefore only be used to send risk communication.

References

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9560924/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5519651/>