



1 June 2020

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Zyban® (bupropion hydrochloride) 150mg prolonged release tablets

Priority: Level 3*

Valid until: End November 2020

Issue

1. Zyban® (bupropion hydrochloride) 150mg prolonged release tablets will be out of stock from week commencing 15th June 2020 until the end of November 2020.
2. Unlicensed supplies of bupropion 150mg prolonged release tablets have been sourced.
3. Champix® (varenicline tartrate) tablets, which are licensed for the treatment of nicotine dependence, are available.
4. Various nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) are also available.

Advice and Actions

5. All healthcare professionals in primary, secondary or specialist healthcare services including local stop smoking services, should work with clinicians including pharmacists to ensure the following actions are undertaken where relevant:
 - defer initiating new patients on Zyban® 150mg prolonged release tablets until the supply disruption is resolved;
 - for patients taking Zyban® as a smoking cessation aid, clinicians should consider alternative pharmacotherapy options (see further advice below);
 - be aware that unlicensed bupropion 150mg prolonged release tablets cannot be issued against a Patient Group Direction (PGD); and
 - GPs to identify any patients currently prescribed Zyban® 150mg prolonged release tablets for off-label use (e.g. treatment resistant depression) and:
 - make early contact with the patient or patient's carer to allow time to plan for any withdrawal/switch strategies;
 - consider prescribing unlicensed bupropion 150mg prolonged release tablets if appropriate;
 - refer patients to their secondary care specialist for individual review if unlicensed bupropion tablets are not considered appropriate.

Additional Information

Unlicensed imports

6. The following specialist importer companies are able to source bupropion 150mg prolonged release tablets (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Alium Medical
 - Clinigen
 - Mawdsleys

- Target Healthcare.
7. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Board or local governance procedures. Please see the links below for further information:
- [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC),
 - [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
 - [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Alternative treatment options

8. There is no dose equivalence data when switching between Zyban® and other smoking cessation treatments.
- All Champix® (varenicline tartrate) formulations remain available. Pfizer have advised they are able to support an uplift in demand during this time.
 - Various nicotine replacement therapies also remain available.
9. Although Zyban® is rarely prescribed for treatment resistant depression, patients prescribed it for this indication are likely to have previously tried several other anti-depressants and should be referred to their secondary care specialist for individual review if unlicensed supplies are not considered appropriate.

Enquiries

10. Enquiries from Health Boards or healthcare professionals should be directed in the first instance to PharmacyTeam@gov.scot (primary care) or NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.net (secondary care).