

29 July 2022

## **Medicine Supply Alert Notice**

### **Hydrocortisone 2.5mg Muco-Adhesive Buccal Tablets**

**Priority: Level 2\***

**Valid until: w/c 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

#### **Issue**

1. Hydrocortisone 2.5mg muco-adhesive buccal tablets are out of stock until w/c 5th September 2022.
2. Other over-the-counter preparations such as topical anaesthetics, topical analgesics/anti-inflammatory agents and topical antimicrobial agents marketed as oral gels, mouthwashes and oral sprays remain available.
3. Betamethasone soluble tablets for off-label topical use in the treatment of aphthous ulcers remain available.

#### **Advice and Actions**

4. Clinicians considering treatment for patients presenting with oral ulcers should:
  - assess the severity of the patient's ulcers including frequency and interference with daily activities;
  - if treatment is required, establish whether over-the-counter products (purchased or prescribed) have already been tried, and whether it is appropriate to use/retry;
  - if above mentioned treatments are not suitable, consider prescribing betamethasone soluble tablets for off-label topical use as a mouthwash, counselling patients on how to administer treatment, and stressing that the mouthwash must **not** be swallowed;
  - if neither of the above options are appropriate, prescribers should seek specialist advice from the oral medicine clinic.

#### **Additional Information**

##### **Clinical Information**

5. Hydrocortisone muco-adhesive buccal tablets are licensed for local use in previously diagnosed aphthous ulceration of the mouth.
6. Topical corticosteroids are usually considered to be first-line treatment of aphthous ulcers if simple therapies such as topical anaesthetics (e.g. lidocaine hydrochloride), topical analgesics/anti-inflammatory agents (e.g. benzydamine hydrochloride), and topical antimicrobial agents (e.g. chlorhexidine mouthwash) have not provided sufficient symptomatic relief.
7. Betamethasone 500 microgram soluble tablet prepared as a mouthwash is used off label to treat aphthous ulceration. The BNF recommends a dose for oral ulceration in adults and

children age 12 to 17 years of 500 micrograms four times a day. The tablet should be dissolved in 20 mL water, rinsed around the mouth, and **not** swallowed.

8. Please see the following links for further information:

#### Links

[SmPC hydrocortisone 2.5mg Muco Adhesive Buccal Tablets](#)

[BNF: Treatment summary - Oral ulceration and inflammation](#)

[NICE CKS - Scenario: Management of aphthous ulcer](#)

[SPS: Understanding safety risks with betamethasone soluble tablets used as mouthwash](#)

[PIL: Betamethasone 500 microgram soluble tablets used as a mouthwash](#)

#### **Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website**

9. The UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in conjunction with the NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) have launched an online Medicines Supply Tool, which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues.

10. To access the online Medicines Supply Tool it is required to register with the [SPS website](#). Registration for access to the website is available to UK healthcare professionals and organisations providing NHS healthcare. The tool is located under the Planning tab and then click on Medicines Supply option.

11. We encourage prescribers, pharmacy professionals, and pharmacy procurement leads in Scotland to register with the SPS website and use its Medicine Supply Tool in order to stay up to date with regards to medicines supply disruptions.

12. Please be aware that while medicines supply issues will appear on the SPS website, some of the recommended actions may not be appropriate / relevant within the Scottish context.

#### **Enquiries**

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