



22 August 2023

## **Medicine Supply Alert Notice**

Disulfiram 200mg tablets

**Priority: Level 2\***  
**Valid until: late August 2023**

### **Issue**

1. Disulfiram 200mg tablets are out of stock until late August 2023.
2. Unlicensed supplies of disulfiram 200mg tablets may be sourced and lead times may vary.

### **Advice and Actions**

3. Until the shortage resolves, healthcare professionals should:
  - not start new patients on disulfiram 200mg tablets;
  - for existing patients, consider reducing the dose of stable patients who take disulfiram 200mg tablets once daily to three times a week until the resupply date;
  - where the above is not appropriate, check if patient has sufficient stock until the resupply date and if not, consider prescribing one months' supply of unlicensed disulfiram 200mg tablets.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Clinical Information**

4. Disulfiram is indicated as an adjuvant in the treatment of carefully selected and co-operative patients with alcohol dependency. Its use must be accompanied by appropriate supportive treatment.
5. Disulfiram is used in patients who have a goal of abstinence but for whom acamprosate and oral naltrexone are not suitable, or in patients who prefer disulfiram and understand the relative risks of taking the drug. Disulfiram has a different mechanism of action as well as having a different psychological impact on patients compared to acamprosate and naltrexone, which are often tried before disulfiram, and therefore acamprosate and naltrexone may not be an option for existing patients. Unlicensed disulfiram 200mg tablets may be prescribed in existing patients where alternative treatments are unsuitable.
6. Patients must not be switched to unlicensed depot disulfiram as the evidence base for its efficacy is poor and it has significant risks associated with it.

## Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

7. The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed disulfiram 200mg tablets (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
  - Mawdsleys
  - Target Healthcare
8. 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:
  - [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
  - [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society
  - [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC)
9. Please refer to the links below for further information:
  - [SmPC Disulfiram 200mg tablets](#)
  - [SmPC Acamprosate 333mg gastro-resistant tablets](#)
  - [SmPC Naltrexone hydrochloride 50mg film-coated tablets](#)
  - [BNF Disulfiram](#)
  - [NICE guidance: alcohol-use disorders](#)

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

10. The UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in conjunction with SPS have launched an online Medicines Supply Tool, which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues.
11. To access the online Medicines Supply Tool you need 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 Tools tab and then click on the Medicines Supply option.
12. 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 concerning medicines supply disruptions.
13. Please be aware that while medicines supply issues will appear on the SPS website, some of the recommended actions may not always be appropriate / relevant within the Scottish context.

## **Enquiries**

14. 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).