



3 October 2023

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Azelaic acid (Skinoren®) 20% cream

Priority: Level 2*

Valid until: early November 2023

Issue

1. Azelaic acid (Skinoren®) 20% cream is out of stock until early November 2023.
2. Azelaic acid (Finacea®) 15% gel remains available but cannot support an uplift in demand.
3. Alternative topical treatments remain available and can support an uplift in demand.

Advice and Actions

4. Where patients have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, prescribers should:
 - refer to treatment guidelines/local formularies and consider prescribing an alternative topical treatment, ensuring there are no contra-indications or intolerance of active drug/excipients, and if considering a topical retinoid, that patients of childbearing age, are not pregnant or planning a pregnancy; and
 - counsel patients on use of the alternative product, including a discussion about whether there is a need to consider contraception for patients of child-bearing age, if prescribed a topical retinoid (see Additional Information).

Additional Information

Clinical Information

5. Topical azelaic acid preparations are used for the treatment of acne and rosacea. Skinoren® cream (20%) and Finacea® gel (15%) differ in range of licensed indications:
 - Skinoren® (20% cream) is licensed for topical treatment of acne vulgaris in patients aged from 12 years.
 - Finacea® (15% gel) is licensed for use in patients aged from 12 years with mild to moderate papularpustular acne of the facial area, and for use in adults with papulopustular rosacea.

Alternative topical treatments

6. The choice of alternative agent will be determined by indication, contra-indications, intolerance of active agent/excipients, licensed age groups, and treatments already tried.
7. Azelaic acid is a first-line topical treatment option for papulopustular rosacea, alternative topical treatments for rosacea include topical ivermectin and topical metronidazole.
8. Local/national guidance should be consulted for selection of an alternative preparation for acne. For those products containing known teratogenic drugs or drugs with teratogenic potential, such as topical retinoids (e.g., adapalene, tretinoin), pregnancy/plans to become pregnant, and acceptability of using contraception should be established in patients of child-bearing age.
9. The [MHRA](#) notes that systemic exposure is thought to be negligible following application of topical retinoids (adapalene, and tretinoin based products) during pregnancy, but since risk cannot be excluded, use is contraindicated during pregnancy as a precaution. It recommends that women and girls should be advised not to use topical retinoids if they are planning a pregnancy and to use effective contraception to minimise the risk of accidental exposure in pregnancy if they are of childbearing potential.

Links

- [Skinoren® 20% cream SmPC](#)
- [Finacea® gel SmPC](#)
- [NICE CKS – Management of acne vulgaris in primary care](#)
- [NICE CKS- topical retinoids](#)
- [BNF acne](#)
- [NICE CKS – Rosacea](#)
- [BAD guidelines rosacea](#)
- [BNF rosacea](#)
- [Soolantra® \(ivermectin\) cream SmPC](#)
- [Rozex® \(metronidazole\) cream or gel SmPC](#)
- [MHRA Drug Safety Update 2019: Teratogenic risk with topical retinoids](#)

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 (primary care) or NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot (secondary care).