



16 October 2023

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Azithromycin (Azyter[®]) 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free)

Priority: Level 2*

Valid until: mid-November 2023

Issue

1. Azithromycin (Azyter[®]) 15mg/g eye drops are out of stock from mid-October to mid-November 2023
2. Alternative topical and oral antibiotics remain available.
3. Where alternative antibiotics are unsuitable, unlicensed imports of azithromycin 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free) can be sourced.

Advice and Actions

4. Pharmacy Teams, in consultation with clinicians/prescribers, should:
 - reserve existing stock of azithromycin (Azyter[®]) 15mg/g eye drops for the treatment of trachomatous conjunctivitis.
 - Where alternative antibiotics are unsuitable, suppliers of unlicensed imports of azithromycin 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free) have been identified and orders can be placed through them. Note: consider lead times for delivery; (see Additional Information) and
 - if the above options are not suitable, refer to genito-urinary medicine specialists for advice on alternative treatments (see Additional Information).
5. For the treatment of purulent bacterial conjunctivitis or blepharitis, prescribers should consider an alternative antibiotic in line with local guidelines, ensuring patient is not intolerant to any excipients in the product prescribed.

Additional Information

Clinical Information

6. Azithromycin eye drops are licensed for the treatment of purulent bacterial conjunctivitis and trachomatous conjunctivitis caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis* in children (aged from birth to 17 years) and adults. One drop is administered in the conjunctival fornix twice a day for three days. It is also used off-label for the second line treatment of blepharitis.

7. Treatment regimens for trachomatous conjunctivitis may comprise a combination of azithromycin eye drops and an oral antibiotic. Second line treatment option involves use of another oral antibiotic regimen, either as monotherapy, or in combination with the drops. The management of sexually transmitted eye infections should be carried out in conjunction with genito-urinary medicine specialists.
8. For purulent bacterial conjunctivitis and blepharitis, treatment guidelines recommend a number of alternative topical and/or systemic antibiotics.

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

9. The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed azithromycin (Azyter[®]) 15mg/g eye drops 0.25g unit dose preservative free (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Mawdsleys
 - Smartway
10. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant regulatory, professional and Board guidance and 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)

Links

- [CKS: Conjunctivitis - infective](#)
- [CKS: Management of blepharitis](#)
- [BNFC: Eye infections in neonates](#)
- [College of Optometrists Guideline: Conjunctivitis, Chlamydial](#)
- [College of Optometrists Guideline: Blepharitis](#)
- [College of Optometrists Guideline: Conjunctivitis \(bacterial\)](#)
- [College of Optometrists Guideline: Ophthalmia neonatorum](#)

DHSC medicines supply tool (hosted on Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website)

11. 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. 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. 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

13. 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).

