



12 February 2024

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Methadone 5mg tablets

Priority: Level 2*
Valid until: late May 2024

Issue

1. Methadone 5mg tablets are out of stock until late May 2024.
2. Supplies will continue to be available in secondary care to meet historic demand only throughout this period. However, the supplies of Methadone 5mg tablets allocated to secondary care are unable to support demand from primary care providers.
3. Methadone 1mg/ml oral solution (with/without sugar) remains available and can support increased demand to meet primary care demand.
4. Unlicensed imports of methadone 5mg tablets may be sourced, lead times vary.

Advice and Actions

5. Prescribers should not initiate new patients on methadone 5mg tablets until the supply issue resolves.
6. Where patients have insufficient supply of methadone 5mg tablets to last until the re-supply date, clinicians should consider:
 - prescribing methadone 1mg/ml oral solution;
 - prescribing unlicensed products only where licensed alternatives are not appropriate. Prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary (see additional information); or
 - if the above options are not considered appropriate, advice should be sought from specialists on alternative management options.

Additional Information

[Links to further information](#)

[SmPC Methadone](#)
[BNF Methadone](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed import

7. The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed supplies of methadone 5mg tablets (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Alium Medical
 - Mawdsley's Unlicensed
 - Target Healthcare
8. 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)

Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website

9. 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.
10. We encourage prescribers, pharmacy professionals, and pharmacy procurement leads in Scotland to register with the SPS website and use its Medicine Supply Tool 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

11. 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).