



29 February 2024

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid unit dose vials

Priority: Level 3*

Valid until: TBC

Issue

1. Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid is in very limited supply with a resolution date to be confirmed.
2. Unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid have been sourced, lead times vary.
3. Alternative beta₂-agonists for nebulisation remain available, however, they cannot support an increase in demand.
4. Additional guidance to Health Boards and healthcare professionals has been issued via an National Patient Safety Alert ([NatPSA/2024/003/DHSC_MVA](#)).

Advice and Actions

5. Primary and secondary care should:
 - place **urgent** orders now for unlicensed imports of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid (see additional information below). Due to lead times, do not wait for licensed supplies to be exhausted before placing orders for imports. Prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary; and
 - note and complete the actions outlined in the [National Patient Safety Alert](#).

Additional Information

Clinical information

6. Salbutamol is a selective beta₂-agonist providing short-acting (4-6 hour) bronchodilation with a fast onset (within 5 minutes) in reversible airways obstruction. The nebuliser liquids are licensed for use in the management of chronic bronchospasm unresponsive to conventional therapy, and in the treatment of acute severe asthma.
7. [BTS/SIGN guidance](#) recommends that in patients with mild to moderate asthma attacks, beta₂-agonists can be administered by repeated activations of a pressurised metered dose inhaler via an appropriate large volume spacer. In acute-severe or life-threatening asthma, beta₂-agonists should be administered by nebulisation.

*<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/media/1842/medicine-supply-alert-notices-definitions-of-classifications-21-october-2019.pdf>

Links to further information

- [SmPC: salbutamol nebuliser liquid](#)
- [BNF: salbutamol](#)
- [BNFC: salbutamol](#)
- [BTS/SIGN guidance on the management of asthma](#)
- [BTS guidelines on the Management of Asthma](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

8. The following specialist importer(s) have confirmed they can source unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

Importer	Salbutamol	MHRA letter of no objection	Lead time (once letter of no objection received)	Pack size	Ordering Instructions
Alium Medical	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	1-2 weeks	30	All enquiries on pricing/account opening/orders should be sent to: enquiries@aliummedical.com
	5mg/2.5ml		2-3 weeks	5	
Genetech Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	7-10 days	60	Send a purchase order directly to our order processing department at: orders@genetechpharma.co.uk . For pricing and availability inquiries, hospitals or pharmacies are encouraged to contact: sales@genetechpharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Mawdsley's	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	3 weeks	25	Orders can be emailed to: unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk or via EDI*
	5mg/2.5ml		4 weeks	30	
QMED Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	3-4 weeks	60	To order products, Boards should send PDF purchase orders to: orders@qmedpharma.co.uk and unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml		4-5 weeks	60	
Smartway Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	2-3 weeks	20	Orders can be sent via email or GHX [^] to our email address: ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml		1 week	20	
Tanner Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	5-7 days	20	All orders can be placed via email to: fbrett@tannerpharma.com
	5mg/2.5ml		5-7 days	20	
Target Healthcare	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	1-2 weeks	20	Orders via email to Hospitals@targethealthcare.co.uk for Secondary Care and specials@target-healthcare.co.uk for Primary care

*Electronic Data Interchange ^GHX = Order management system

9. 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

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. 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.
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 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

12. 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).