



30 May 2024

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

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

Priority: Level 2*
Valid until: TBC

Issue

1. There will be intermittent supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebules for the foreseeable future.
2. Unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg and 5mg nebules can be sourced (see Additional information), lead times vary.
3. Alternative beta₂-agonists for nebulisation and intravenous administration remain available, however, they cannot support an increase in demand.
4. Access to licensed salbutamol nebules will be actively monitored. Where possible, supplies will be prioritised for primary care and ambulance services who are less able to use unlicensed supplies.

Advice and Actions

5. All pharmacy teams involved in the procurement of medicines across primary and secondary care should:
 - ensure licensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebules are **only** ordered in line with historic demand. Orders will be monitored and excessive orders challenged;
 - place orders with their usual wholesaler. Please ensure orders are not duplicated across multiple wholesalers or suppliers; and
 - where licensed supplies are unavailable, work with prescribers to use unlicensed imports (see Additional information).
6. Additionally, secondary care NHS pharmacy procurement teams should:
 - continue to place orders for unlicensed imports of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebules to provide a buffer stock of 2-4 weeks cover to support during periods of limited supply (see Additional information).

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

Additional Information

Clinical information

7. 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.
8. In patients with mild to moderate asthma attacks or acute exacerbations of COPD, beta₂-agonists can be considered for administration by repeated activations of a pressurised metered dose inhaler via an appropriate spacer (give one puff at a time; according to response, give another puff every 60 seconds up to maximum of 10 puffs), if appropriate. In acute-severe or life-threatening asthma, beta₂-agonists should be administered by nebulisation.

Links to further information

- [SmPC: salbutamol nebuliser solution](#)
- [BNF: salbutamol](#)
- [BNFC: salbutamol](#)
- [NICE guideline \[NG115\]: COPD](#)
- [BTS guidelines on the Management of Asthma](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

9. The following specialist importer(s) have confirmed they can source unlicensed supplies of **salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebules** (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	Received	1-2 weeks	20	All enquiries on pricing/account opening/orders should be sent to: enquiries@aliummedical.com
	5mg/2.5ml		End May		
Chemys Ltd	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	5-7 days	20	Orders can be emailed to: sales@chemys.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Clinigen	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	End May	20	Tel: 01932 824100; Email: ukcustomerservices@clinigengroup.com or via EDI*
	5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 days		
Genetech Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 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				

Importer	Salbutamol	MHRA letter of no objection	Lead time (once letter of no objection received)	Pack size	Ordering Instructions
Mawdsley's	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	3 weeks	20	Orders can be emailed to: unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk or via EDI*
	5mg/2.5ml	Received		30	
QMED Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	2-3 weeks	60	To order products, Health Boards should send PDF purchase orders to: orders@qmedpharma.co.uk and unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Smartway Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	next day delivery	20	Orders can be sent via email or GHX^ to our email address: ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Target Healthcare	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 days	60	Orders via email to Hospitals@targethealthcare.co.uk for Secondary Care and specials@target-healthcare.co.uk for Primary care
	5mg/2.5ml			30/60	

*Electronic Data Interchange

^GHX = Order management system

10. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Board or local governance procedures. Unlicensed imports do not undergo any central quality assessment or suitability evaluation. Therefore, any import must be locally assessed in line with local unlicensed medicines processes.
11. 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

12. 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.
13. 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

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).