



9 August 2024

## **Medicine Supply Alert Notice**

### **Cefalexin 500mg tablets**

**Priority: Level 2\***

**Valid until: late September 2024**

#### **Issue**

1. Cefalexin 500mg tablets are out of stock until late-September 2024.
2. Cefalexin 500mg capsules remain available and can support an uplift in demand.
3. Alternative cefalexin preparations remain available but are unable to support an uplift in demand.
4. A Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for cefalexin 500mg tablets was issued on 06/08/2024 (ref SSP 072). See [PCA\(P\)\(2024\)22](#) for further information.

#### **Advice and Actions**

5. Community pharmacists and dispensing doctors should:
  - where a prescription for cefalexin 500mg tablets is presented and cannot be fulfilled, cefalexin 500mg capsules should be supplied in accordance with SSP 072;
  - ensure the cautions and exclusion criteria are taken into account when considering using an SSP; and
  - ensure patients/parents/carers are counselled regarding the switch in formulation, and acceptability of gelatin in the capsules.
6. If the patient is deemed ineligible or does not consent to receive the capsule formulation via the SSP, they should be promptly referred back to the prescriber.
7. Prescribers should:
  - not initiate new patients on cefalexin 500mg tablets until the supply issue has resolved;
  - consider prescribing cefalexin 500mg capsules, if suitable, checking patient acceptability of gelatin content of capsules; and
  - if cefalexin capsules are unsuitable, consider prescribing an alternative antibiotic, taking into account allergies and local and national guidance on antimicrobial prescribing.

#### **Additional Information**

##### **Clinical Information**

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

8. Cefalexin is a 'first generation' cephalosporin licensed for the treatment of the following infections due to susceptible micro-organisms: respiratory tract infections, otitis media, skin and soft tissue infections, bone and joint infections, genito-urinary infections, including acute prostatitis, and dental infections.
9. Please refer to the below links for further information:
- [SmPC: Cefalexin](#)
  - [BNF: Cefalexin](#)
  - [Summary of antimicrobial prescribing guidance - managing common infections Serious Shortage Protocol for Cefalexin 500mg tablets](#)

### **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 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](mailto:PharmacyTeam@gov.scot) (primary care) or [NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot](mailto:NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot) (secondary care).