



16 October 2024

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Artemether 20mg / lumefantrine 120mg (Riamet®) tablets

Priority: Level 2*

Valid until: mid-November 2024

Issue

1. Artemether 20mg / lumefantrine 120mg (Riamet®) tablets are out of stock until mid-November 2024.
2. Alternative malaria treatments remain available and can support an increase in demand.

Advice and Actions

3. Where patients have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, clinicians should:
 - not initiate new patients on artemether 20mg / lumefantrine 120mg (Riamet®) tablets until the supply issue has resolved; and
 - consider prescribing atovaquone with proguanil or quinine plus doxycycline for non-pregnant adult patients, where appropriate, referring to national or local guidance.
 - consider 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 below); and
4. Where the above options are not appropriate and for children and pregnant patients, advice should be sought from specialists on alternative management options.

Additional Information

Clinical Information

5. Riamet® (artemether-lumefantrine) is an artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) licensed for the treatment of acute uncomplicated Plasmodium falciparum malaria in adults, children and infants with a bodyweight of 5 kg and above.
6. The BNF notes ACT is the recommended treatment of uncomplicated P. falciparum malaria, of which artemether with lumefantrine, is the drug of choice. Atovaquone-proguanil or oral quinine may be used to treat uncomplicated falciparum malaria if ACT is unavailable. Quinine is highly effective but poorly tolerated in prolonged treatment and should be used in combination with an

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

additional drug, usually oral doxycycline (or clindamycin [unlicensed] in pregnant women and young children).

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

7. 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. 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 to further information

- [CKS NICE - Malaria](#)
- [BMJ Best Practice – Malaria infection](#)
- [BNF - Artemether with lumefantrine](#)
- [BNF – Malaria treatment](#)
- [SmPC – Quinine](#)
- [SmPC – Doxycycline](#)
- [SmPC - Atovaquone with proguanil](#)
- [SmPC - Artemether 20mg / Lumefantrine 120mg \(Riamet\) tablets](#)

Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website

8. 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.
9. 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

10. 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).