



27 December 2024

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspensions, sugar free

Priority: Level 2*
Valid until: mid-2025

Issue

1. Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**sugar free**) are out of stock until mid-2025.
2. Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**non-sugar free**) remain available and can support a full uplift in demand.
3. Serious Shortage Protocols (SSP) for cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspensions (**sugar free**) were issued (see [PCA\(P\)\(2024\)38](#) and [PCA\(P\)\(2024\)39](#)).

Advice and Actions

Actions for prescribers:

- consider prescribing cefalexin 125mg/5ml or 250mg/5ml oral suspension (non-sugar free) in the first instance, if appropriate (see Additional information section below); and
- if unsuitable, consider prescribing an alternative antibiotic liquid, with reference to local guidance and allergies.

Actions for pharmacists and dispensing doctors:

4. Where a prescription for cefalexin 125mg/5ml or 250mg/5ml oral suspension (sugar free) is presented and cannot be fulfilled:
 - supply an alternative cefalexin oral suspension according to the products specified in [SSP077](#) or [SSP078](#), which is non-sugar free;
 - ensure the cautions and exclusion criteria are considered when using the SSP;
 - ensure patients/parents/guardians/carers are counselled regarding the substitute product; and
 - if the patient is deemed ineligible or they or their parent/guardian/carer does not consent to receive an alternative product via the SSP, they should be promptly referred back to the prescriber.
5. Individual SmPCs should be checked for cautions, contraindications, and excipients, as these may vary between products.

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

Additional Information

Clinical Information

6. Cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free contains sorbitol and the non-sugar free suspension contains sucrose.
7. In its position statement on choosing an oral liquid medicine for children, the Neonatal & Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) considers short-term exposure to sucrose (sugar) in medicines (e.g. a 7-day antibiotic course), where use is not contra-indicated, unlikely to be problematic in most cases, but for long-term therapy, sugar-free preparations are preferred. In patients with diabetes, it considers ingestion of amounts under 5g per dose of medicine unlikely to affect blood sugar control significantly.

Links to further information

- [NHSBSA Serious Shortage Protocols](#)
- [SmPC cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension, sugar free \(Aurobindo Pharma- Milpharm Ltd\)](#)
- [SmPC cefalexin 250mg/5ml oral suspension, sugar free Aurobindo Pharma- Milpharm Ltd\)](#)
- [SmPC cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension, non sugar free \(Flynn Pharma Ltd\)](#)
- [SmPC cefalexin 250mg/5ml oral suspension, non sugar free \(Flynn Pharma Ltd\)](#)
- [BNF Cefalexin](#)
- [NPPS Position Statement: Choosing an oral liquid medicine for children](#)

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).