



27 May 2025

Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml elixir

Priority: Level 2*

Valid until: late June 2025

Issue

1. Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **elixir** (500ml) is out of stock until late June 2025.
2. Specials of phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **oral solution** and phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **oral suspension** remain available (see Additional information section)

Advice and Actions

3. Prescribers should not initiate patients on phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **elixir** until the supply issues have resolved.
4. Where patients have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, clinicians should:
 - review patients and consider prescribing Specials of phenobarbital 15mg/5ml oral solution or oral suspension, checking the list of excipients and pharmaceutical differences to ensure suitability for patient (see Additional information section); and
 - advise patients that they are receiving the same drug therapy but from a different manufacturer to avoid a break in treatment, and to report signs indicating a potential loss of seizure control and/or new/worsening side effects.

Additional Information

Clinical Information

5. Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml elixir is licensed for the treatment of all forms of epilepsy except absence seizures. It is a category 1 antiepileptic drug where patients should be maintained on a specific product as clinically relevant differences between different manufacturers' products might occur, even when the pharmaceutical forms are the same and bioequivalence has been shown. However, in the event of a shortage, maintaining treatment with another manufacturer's product is necessary to avoid treatment interruption and potential loss of seizure control.

Links to further information

- [SmPC: Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml Elixir](#)
- [BNF: Phenobarbital](#)

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

- [BNF: Epilepsy treatment summaries](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed medicines

6. The following Specials manufacturers have confirmed they can source unlicensed phenobarbital 15mg/5ml oral liquid, solution or suspension. Please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies. **The full list of excipients should be requested from each supplier and reviewed for appropriateness as these can vary.**

Supplier	Formulation	Lead time	Pack sizes available	Shelf life	Pharmacy ordering process
Eaststone	Oral suspension	Next working day	Any	90 days expiry	If pharmacy has an account, need to place order via Eaststone online portal. If pharmacy does not have an account, email: lucy.kirkpatrick@eaststone.co.uk
IPS Pharma	Oral solution (alcohol and sugar free)	Next working day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 200ml • 400ml • 500ml 	33 days from manufacture	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up. IPS Pharma - contact: Orders@ips-pharma.com
Nova Laboratories	Oral liquid (alcohol free)	Orders placed before 12pm will be manufactured for delivery on the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml 	6 months	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up. Novo Laboratories – contact: sales@novalabs.co.uk (takes approx. 24 hours to set up). Order form is emailed for completion.
Nova Laboratories	Oral suspension (alcohol and sugar free)	Orders placed before 12pm will be manufactured for delivery on the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 150ml • 200ml • 300ml • 500ml 	12 weeks from the date of manufacture	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up Novo Laboratories – contact: sales@novalabs.co.uk (takes approx. 24 hours to set up). Order form is emailed for completion.
Rokshaw Laboratories	Oral solution (alcohol and sugar free)	Depending on pack size and how much is ordered - this could be the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150ml • 200ml • 500ml 	90 days from manufacture	If pharmacy has an account, need to place order via Rokshaw's online portal. If pharmacy does not have an account, email: orders@rokshaw.co.uk , requesting for an order form to complete.
SyriMed	Oral solution	Next day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 500ml 	90 Days	Contact number: 0808 178 1914 https://www.bnsgroup.co.uk/login Email Order - specials@thamelabs.co.uk
SyriMed	Oral suspension	Next day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 500ml 	90 days	Contact number: 0808 178 1914 https://www.bnsgroup.co.uk/login Email Order - specials@thamelabs.co.uk

Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website

7. The UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in conjunction with the Specialist Pharmacy Service (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.
8. 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

9. 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).