



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2023/062

Paracetamol suppositories

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 29/06/2023

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

Summary

- Paracetamol 60mg suppositories are out of stock until w/c 1st April 2024.
- Paracetamol 125mg suppositories are out of stock until October 2023.
- Paracetamol 240mg suppositories are out of stock until w/c 10th July 2023.
- Paracetamol 250mg suppositories will be out of stock from August 2023 until October 2023.
- Paracetamol 120mg suppositories remain available.
- Paracetamol 500mg and 1000mg suppositories (Typharm) remain available.
- Unlicensed supplies of paracetamol 60mg, 80mg, 125mg, 240mg and 250mg suppositories may be sourced, lead times vary.

Actions Required

Where patients have insufficient supplies of paracetamol 125mg or 240mg suppositories to last until the re-supply date, clinicians and pharmacy teams should:

- review patients to determine if this is still the most suitable therapy or whether alternative presentations of paracetamol (e.g., liquid) may be appropriate;
- consider prescribing paracetamol 120mg in place of 125mg suppositories during this time;
- consider prescribing paracetamol 250mg in place of 240mg suppositories until back in stock in July;
- consider prescribing paracetamol 240mg in place of 250mg suppositories from August; and
- counsel patients regarding the change in strength of the suppositories.

Where patients have insufficient supplies of paracetamol 60mg suppositories to last until the re-supply date, and liquid formulation is not suitable, clinicians and pharmacy teams should:

- consider prescribing paracetamol 120mg suppositories to be halved lengthwise (off-label use) to provide a 60mg dose, and ensure the carer is able to carry out this manipulation;
- write the prescription clearly to emphasise only half of a 120mg suppository should be administered, with the carer counselled on dosing and administration, and
- if halving a 120mg suppository is not appropriate, consider whether a dose change to 80mg is appropriate, as unlicensed supplies of 80mg suppositories (indicated for use in children from the age of 3 months) may be sourced (see supporting information below).

Consider prescribing unlicensed products only where the alternative approach outlined above is not appropriate. Prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary (see supporting information below), and if the above options are not considered appropriate, advice should be sought from specialists on management options.

*Classification of Tiers can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-guide-to-managing-medicines-supply-and-shortages/>

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Paracetamol suppositories are licensed for mild to moderate pain and pyrexia in children. The 60 mg suppositories are licensed for use in children aged up to 1 year. The 120mg and 240mg suppositories are licensed for 1 year and over.

The dose difference between paracetamol 120mg and 125mg suppositories and between paracetamol 240mg and 250mg suppositories is negligible in context of the overall dosing schedule. The BNFC has no clinical or licensing concerns if switching between paracetamol 120mg and 125mg or between 240mg and 250mg suppositories.

Halving suppository (off-label use)

Distribution of the active substance is not always uniform in a suppository and there may be a greater concentration of drug in the tip therefore it is advisable to cut the suppository in half lengthwise.

Please refer to the links below

- [BNFc paracetamol](#)
- [SmPC paracetamol suppositories](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed paracetamol 60mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Alium
 - Orifarm
- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed paracetamol 80mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Mawdsleys
- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed paracetamol 125mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - BAP Pharma
 - Mawdsleys
 - Orifarm
- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed paracetamol 240mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Mawdsleys
- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed paracetamol 250mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - BAP Pharma
 - Mawdsleys
 - Orifarm
- Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust or local governance procedures. 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),

Enquiries

Enquiries from NHS Trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to your Regional Pharmacy Procurement Specialist, who will escalate to national teams if required.

REGION	Full Name	Email
Midlands	Andi Swain (East Midlands)	andi.swain@nhs.net
	Diptyka Hart (West Midlands)	Diptyka.Hart@uhb.nhs.uk
East of England	James Kent	james.kent@nhs.net
London	Jackie Eastwood	jacqueline.eastwood@gstt.nhs.uk
North East and Yorkshire	David Allwood (Yorkshire)	davidallwood@nhs.net
North West	Richard Bateman	richard.bateman@liverpoolft.nhs.uk
South East	Alison Ashman	Alison.Ashman@berkshire.nhs.uk
South West	Danny Palmer	danny.palmer@uhbw.nhs.uk

Scotland

nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot

Wales

MedicinesShortages@gov.wales

Northern Ireland

RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net

All other organisations should send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Medicine Supply Team quoting reference number MSN/2023/062.

Email: DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.