



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2023/096

Azithromycin (Azyter®) 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free)

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 12/10/2023

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

Summary

- Azithromycin (Azyter®) 15mg/g eye drops are out of stock from mid-October to mid-November 2023
- Alternative topical and oral antibiotics remain available
- Where alternative antibiotics are unsuitable, unlicensed imports of azithromycin 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free) can be sourced

Actions Required

Pharmacy, in consultation with clinicians/prescribers, should:

- reserve existing stock of azithromycin (Azyter®) 15mg/g eye drops for the treatment of trachomatous conjunctivitis
 - where alternative antibiotics are unsuitable, suppliers of unlicensed imports of azithromycin 15mg/g eye drops (0.25g unit dose, preservative free) have been identified and orders can be placed through them. Note: consider lead times for delivery; (see Supporting Information) and
 - if the above options are not suitable, refer to genito-urinary medicine specialists for advice on alternative treatments (see Supporting Information).
- for the treatment of purulent bacterial conjunctivitis or blepharitis, prescribers should consider an alternative antibiotic in line with local guidelines, ensuring patient is not intolerant to any excipients in the product prescribed.

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Azithromycin eye drops are licensed for the treatment of purulent bacterial conjunctivitis and trachomatous conjunctivitis caused by Chlamydia trachomatis in children (aged from birth to 17 years) and adults. One drop is administered in the conjunctival fornix twice a day for three days. It is also used off-label for the second line treatment of blepharitis.

Treatment regimens for trachomatous conjunctivitis may comprise a combination of azithromycin eye drops and an oral antibiotic. Second line treatment option involves use of another oral antibiotic regimen, either as monotherapy, or in combination with the drops. The management of sexually transmitted eye infections should be carried out in conjunction with genito-urinary medicine specialists.

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

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

For purulent bacterial conjunctivitis and blepharitis, treatment guidelines recommend a number of alternative topical and/or systemic antibiotics.

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed azithromycin (Azyter®) 15mg/g eye drops 0.25g unit dose preservative free (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Mawdsleys
 - Smartway
- 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),
- When prescribing a product that is not licensed in the UK due to a supply issue with the licensed alternative prescribers must indicate on the FP10 prescription that an unlicensed product is required. This can be done in one of the following two ways:
 - Electronic prescriptions – if the required unlicensed product is shown on electronic prescribing systems, GPs should select:
 - Azithromycin (Azyter®) 15mg/g eye drops 0.25g unit dose preservative free (imported)
 - Paper prescriptions – where the unlicensed product is not shown on electronic prescribing systems, GPs should use a paper prescription and annotate with the following wording: **“special order”**.

Links

[CKS: Conjunctivitis - infective](#)

[CKS: Management of blepharitis](#)

[BNFC: Eye infections in neonates](#)

[College of Optometrists Guideline: Conjunctivitis, Chlamydial](#)

[College of Optometrists Guideline: Blepharitis](#)

[College of Optometrists Guideline: Conjunctivitis \(bacterial\)](#)

[College of Optometrists Guideline: Ophthalmia neonatorum](#)

Enquiries

If you have any queries, please contact DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.