



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2024/059

Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid unit dose vials

Tier 2 - medium impact*

Date of issue: 23/05/2024

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

Summary

- There will be intermittent supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers for the foreseeable future.
- Unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg and 5mg nebulisers can be sourced (see Supporting information), lead times vary.
- Alternative beta₂-agonists for nebulisation and intravenous administration remain available, however, they cannot support an increase in demand.
- Access to licensed salbutamol nebulisers will be actively monitored. Where possible, supplies will be prioritised for primary care and ambulance services who are less able to use unlicensed supplies.

Actions Required

All pharmacy procurement teams across primary and secondary care should:

- ensure licensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers are **only** ordered in line with historic demand. Orders will be monitored and excessive orders challenged;
- place orders with their usual wholesaler. Please ensure orders are not duplicated across multiple wholesalers or suppliers; and
- where licensed supplies are unavailable, work with prescribers to use unlicensed imports (see Supporting information).

Additionally, secondary care NHS provider pharmacy procurement teams should:

- continue to place orders for unlicensed imports of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers to provide a buffer stock of 2-4 weeks cover to support during periods of limited supply (see Supporting information).

Supporting information

Clinical information

Salbutamol is a selective beta₂-agonist providing short-acting (4-6 hour) bronchodilation with a fast onset (within 5 minutes) in reversible airways obstruction. The nebuliser liquids are licensed for use in the management of chronic bronchospasm unresponsive to conventional therapy, and in the treatment of acute severe asthma.

In patients with mild to moderate asthma attacks or acute exacerbations of COPD, beta₂-agonists can be considered for administration by repeated activations of a pressurised metered dose inhaler via an appropriate spacer (give one puff at a time; according to response, give another puff every 60 seconds up to maximum of

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

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

10 puffs), if appropriate. In acute-severe or life-threatening asthma, beta₂-agonists should be administered by nebulisation.

Links to further information

SmPC: salbutamol nebuliser solution

BNF: salbutamol

NICE guideline [NG115]: COPD

BNFC: salbutamol

BTS guidelines on the Management of Asthma

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

The following specialist importer(s) have confirmed they can source unlicensed supplies of **salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers** (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

Importer	Salbutamol	MHRA letter of no objection	Lead time (once letter of no objection received)	Pack size	Ordering Instructions
Alium Medical	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 weeks	20	All enquiries on pricing/account opening/orders should be sent to: enquiries@aliummedical.com
	5mg/2.5ml		End May		
Chemys Ltd	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	5-7 days	20	Orders can be emailed to: sales@chemys.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Clinigen	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	End May	20	Tel: 01932 824100; Email: ukcustomerservices@clinigengroup.com or via EDI*
	5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 days		
Genetech Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 days	60	Send a purchase order directly to our order processing department at: orders@genetechpharma.co.uk . For pricing and availability inquiries, hospitals or pharmacies are encouraged to contact: sales@genetechpharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Mawdsley's	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	3 weeks	20	Orders can be emailed to: unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk or via EDI*
	5mg/2.5ml	Received		30	
QMED Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	2-3 weeks	60	To order products, Trusts should send PDF purchase orders to: orders@qmedpharma.co.uk and unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Smartway Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	next day delivery	20	Orders can be sent via email or GHX [^] to our email address: ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk
	5mg/2.5ml				
Target Healthcare	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 days	60	Orders via email to Hospitals@target-healthcare.co.uk for Secondary Care and specials@target-healthcare.co.uk for Primary care
	5mg/2.5ml			30/60	

*Electronic Data Interchange ^GHX = Order management system

Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust 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),

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:

- salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebuliser solution (imported)
- salbutamol 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser solution (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**”.

Enquiries

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

REGION	Lead RPPS	Email	Associate RPPS	Email
Midlands	Andi Swain	andi.swain@nhs.net	Vacant	
East of England	James Kent	james.kent@nhs.net	Tracy McMillan	tracy.mcmillan2@nhs.net
London	Jackie Eastwood	jacqueline.eastwood@gstt.nhs.uk	Daniel Johnson	Daniel.Johnson@gstt.nhs.uk
North East and Yorkshire	David Allwood	davidallwood@nhs.net	Penny Daynes	penny.daynes@nhs.net
North West	Richard Bateman	richard.bateman@liverpoolft.nhs.uk	Andy Stewart	Andrew.stewart@liverpoolft.nhs.uk
South East	Alison Ashman	Alison.Ashman@berkshire.nhs.uk	Melanie Renney	melanie.renney@berkshire.nhs.uk
South West	Danny Palmer	danny.palmer@uhbw.nhs.uk	Natalie Bryson	Natalie.Bryson@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/2024/059

Email: DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.