

## Current drug shortages

There are currently a number of UK wide drug shortages some with increases in cost. Below is a table of those drugs which are likely to have highest impact. The table details the drugs and the specific preparations which are affected and provides information about the estimated timescale for availability and potential cost impact. It should also be recognised a return to normal stock levels may take a week or so from the date manufacturer or wholesaler states the medicine is now available.

(Note: DT = Scottish Drug Tariff)

Drug	Availability information	Suggested alternatives/ comments	Cost impact																								
Trimethoprim 50mg/5ml Suspension	Very limited supply available. Manufacturer expects supply to resume in August/ September 2017	Alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trimethoprim tablets 100mg &amp; 200mg</li> <li>Co-amoxiclav suspension where a liquid preparation is required</li> <li>If Trimethoprim suspension is the only treatment option for an individual, this is available as an unlicensed special</li> </ul>	Co-amoxiclav suspension 125/31 100ml = £2.24 Co-amoxiclav suspension 250/62 100ml = £2.43 Trimethoprim suspension 50mg/5ml 100ml = £2.18 (usual price) Unlicensed trimethoprim suspension significantly higher price (50mg/5ml = £40 to £57 per 100ml)																								
Quetiapine	<b>Standard release Quetiapine tablets:</b> 25mg tablets – limited availability 100mg tablets - limited availability 150mg tablets – unavailable until mid July 200mg tablets - unavailable until end of June 300mg tablets - limited availability 400mg tablets - limited availability  <b>Modified release (MR) Quetiapine tablets</b> All strengths available	Seroquel brand available but short supply of generics will likely result in supply issues of the branded preparation. Continue to prescribe by generic name. Options are to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review ongoing need and effectiveness. If not appropriate to continue then stop</li> <li>Provide the same dose using different strengths eg 200mg as 2x100mg</li> <li>Prescribe the modified release tablets at the same dose, as an acute, then switch back to standard release tablets when available</li> </ul>	Significant cost impact as presently generic quetiapine is the same price as the brand Seroquel  <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>60 tabs</td> <td>60 MR tabs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25mg</td> <td>£40.50</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50mg</td> <td>-</td> <td>£67.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100mg</td> <td>£113.10</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>150mg</td> <td>£96.14</td> <td>£113.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>200mg</td> <td>£113.10</td> <td>£113.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>300mg</td> <td>£170.00</td> <td>£170.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>400mg</td> <td>-</td> <td>£226.20</td> </tr> </table>		60 tabs	60 MR tabs	25mg	£40.50	-	50mg	-	£67.66	100mg	£113.10	-	150mg	£96.14	£113.10	200mg	£113.10	£113.10	300mg	£170.00	£170.00	400mg	-	£226.20
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Mefenamic Acid 500mg tablet	Generic Mefenamic acid and Ponstan forte brand - greatly limited availability	Review and change to alternative NSAID. Further advice available <a href="#">HERE</a>	Mefenamic acid tabs 500mg now £55 for 28 tablets (increased from £7.43 for 28)															
Acetazolamide SR 250mg caps	Availability from Q3 2017	Acetazolamide 250mg tablets are available.  Tablets and modified release capsules are both indicated <b>for glaucoma</b> with the following doses: Tablets: 1 to 4 tablets (in divided doses if taking over 250mg). 250mg MR capsules: 1-2 capsules a day. If taking 250mg SR capsules twice daily for glaucoma, this could be switched to 250mg tablets four times daily (maximum licensed dose). Careful monitoring required when switching between formulations.	Diamox SR 250mg capsules = £15.22 for 112  Acetazolamide 250mg tablets = £22.38 for 112															
Betahistine 8mg and 16mg tablets	Limited availability until July/ August 2017	Alternatives – Cinnarizine, Prochlorperazine	DT price for betahistine increased from £1.79 to £6.33 for 8mg tablets, and from £2.08 to £12.95 for 16mg tablets															
Sumatriptan	Limited/no availability of generic sumatriptan 50mg and now 100mg tablets, due to resolve July 2017 Branded Imigran preparations available but at significantly higher cost	Triptans currently available: Frovatriptan (2.5mg tabs = £10.34 for 6) Eletriptan (20mg & 40mg tabs = £22.50 for 6) Rizatriptan tabs (5mg tabs =£26.74 for 6; 10mg tabs = £3.83 for 3) Naratriptan (2.5mg tabs = £23 for 6) Zolmitriptan – unavailable	Sumatriptan DT price for 50mg tablets increased from £1.72 to £28.65 for 6 tabs; Imigran 50mg tabs = £31.85 for 6  DT price 100mg tablets £2.34 for 6; Imigran 100mg £51.48 for 6 tabs															
Levetiracetam	Very limited/ no availability of generic Levetiracetam tablets	Keppra brand currently not affected by supply issues	Significant cost impact due to price difference between Keppra tablets and generic Levetiracetam (below prices per pack of 60 tablets)  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Levetiracetam tabs</th> <th>Keppra tabs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>250mg</td> <td>£3.53</td> <td>£28.01</td> </tr> <tr> <td>500mg</td> <td>£4.75</td> <td>£49.32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>750mg</td> <td>£6.88</td> <td>£84.02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1g</td> <td>£8.38</td> <td>£95.34</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Levetiracetam tabs	Keppra tabs	250mg	£3.53	£28.01	500mg	£4.75	£49.32	750mg	£6.88	£84.02	1g	£8.38	£95.34
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The information is based on knowledge at the time of publication. For any queries or updates please contact your Prescribing Support Team