

Prescribing Tip For Information

[Advice for prescribers - patients unable to swallow solid oral dosing forms.](#)



The UKMi (UK medicines Information) recommend a stepped approach when choosing suitable medication for those patients unable to take medicines in solid oral dosing forms. Factors influencing choice may include method of feeding, practicalities of administration, product quality and cost.

The following [link](#) offers guidance on the considerations to be taken when choosing formulations for adults with swallowing difficulties.

General advice for prescribers

1. Consider **is the medication essential?** It might, in some instances, be more appropriate to stop therapy, either temporarily or long term.
2. Where possible, use a licensed medicine in a suitable formulation to meet the patient's needs (e.g. a dispersible tablet or licensed liquid medicine). **Consider switching to a different agent in the same class, or to a different route of administration** (eg transdermal patch or buccal tablet) to allow a licensed medicine to be used.
3. Consider using a licensed medicine in an unlicensed manner, for example by crushing/dispersing tablets or opening capsules. **NB. Not all medicines are suitable for use in this manner (eg enteric coated tablets, modified release preparations, hormone, steroid, antibiotics, cytotoxics) and it is important to check beforehand.** Manufacturers do not accept responsibility for any harm caused by taking medicines in an 'off licence' way.
4. In situations where the patient's needs cannot be met by licensed medicines, consider using a special-order product ('special'). **Special-order products are unlicensed and are not required to meet the same standards as licensed preparations. Prescribers assume greater liability when using them and they are often considerably more expensive than licensed medicines.**

SPS (specialist pharmacy service) have produced a range of resources providing guidance on those formulations of medicines more suitable for use in adults with swallowing difficulties. These include guidance on the choice of [antiplatelet medication](#), [proton pump inhibitors](#), [ACE inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor antagonists](#), [oral anticoagulants](#), [selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors](#) and [statin formulations](#).

For further advice on choosing appropriate dosage forms or to check if tablets or capsules can be dispersed, crushed or opened and dispersed, contact your Medicines Optimisation team or [UKMI](#) (contact number 0300 770 8564)

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302

If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips please contact Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net