

Prescribing Tip For Information

Antibiotic supplies for patients with suspected Group A Streptococcus

- Supplies of antibiotics for the treatment of Group A Strep have seen a surge in demand and may be temporarily in limited supply at certain wholesalers and pharmacies.
- Availability is variable across Chorley and Preston with many community pharmacies reporting 'No stock' or 'Limited stock' of many antibiotics especially in liquid form.
- Supplies are available with manufacturers, and deliveries into wholesalers and pharmacies are being expedited and are expected in the coming days.
- NHSE Guidance has been issued : [Group A streptococcus in Children: Interim Clinical Guidance](#). This guides on first line antibiotic treatment choices and alternatives which can be considered if these are not appropriate.
- Tablet/capsules (rather than liquids) should be prescribed where possible during this time of limited supply.

What if the antibiotic is not available? - Guidance on using solid oral dosage forms in children

If the antibiotic prescribed is unavailable clinicians should:

Consider prescribing an alternative pharmaceutical form or strength of the same antibiotic where appropriate, ensuring the patient is not intolerant to any of the excipients in the alternative and is counselled on the appropriate dose required and method of administration. See below for more details.

- Children 5 years and above, may be able to swallow tablets/capsules. Videos and information leaflets for parents on how to administer tablet/capsules for children are available here: [Medicines For Children: Giving medicines advice guide](#) . Prescribers and pharmacists can share the link with parents where appropriate ⁽¹⁾
- An e-learning session developed to help healthcare professionals and carers teach children and young people how to swallow pills is available here: [KidzMed - elearning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](#) ⁽¹⁾
- Where children are unable to swallow oral solid dose forms, SPS have provided advice on how to give doses by dispersing or crushing tablets or opening capsules. Use in this way is outside the product license ('off-label'). Guidance on using solid oral dosage form antibiotics in children can be found [here](#).
- **Parents/carers to be advised that: Crushing / dispersing tablets / opening capsules should NOT be undertaken by anyone with an allergy to that antibiotic.**

If all formulations of the antibiotic are unavailable or unsuitable clinicians should:

Consider prescribing an alternative antibiotic, if the first line option is unavailable or unsuitable in any pharmaceutical form, taking into account any allergies / intolerances in line with [National guidance on Group A Strep in children](#) and [NICE guideline for Sore throat \(acute\) in adults](#) ⁽²⁾

If the above options are not considered appropriate, seek advice from specialists on management options. ⁽²⁾

Additional considerations:

- Consider temporarily removing the pharmacy nomination for the antibiotic prescription.
- Issue the antibiotic on a separate prescription form, from any other medicines, to enable it to be dispensed at any pharmacy.
- Ideally, the community pharmacy should avoid supplying a patient with a partial supply of antibiotic unless they can fulfil the owing and they communicate this well to the patient. If they can't fulfil the whole prescription the patient could be advised to try another community pharmacy.
- **Do Not Advise** the patient attempt to obtain their GP issued antibiotic prescription from the hospital. Secondary care are also experiencing a surge in demand.

References:

1. NHSE Group A streptococcus in Children: Interim Clinical Guidance. 9th December 2022
2. PSNC. Medicine supply notification: Antibiotics for the treatment of Group A Strep. 12th December 2022

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