



## UPDATE:

This MSN supersedes the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) issued on 26 February 2024.

# Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2024/028

Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid unit dose vials

Tier 2 - medium impact\*

Date of issue: 06/03/2024

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

## Summary

- The supply position of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers has improved.
- Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will be in limited supply from mid-April until late June 2024.
- Salbutamol 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will remain available, however, cannot support an increase in demand.
- Unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers can be sourced (see supporting information), lead times vary.
- Alternative beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists for nebulisation and intravenous administration remain available, however, they cannot support an increase in demand.
- Access to licensed salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will be actively monitored and 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; and
- place orders with their usual wholesaler. Please ensure orders are not duplicated across multiple wholesalers or suppliers.

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).

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

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

# Supporting information

## Clinical information

Salbutamol is a selective beta<sub>2</sub>-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, beta<sub>2</sub>-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 10 puffs), if appropriate. In acute-severe or life-threatening asthma, beta<sub>2</sub>-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 (or 2.5mg/3ml) nebulules** (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: <a href="mailto:enquiries@aliummedical.com">enquiries@aliummedical.com</a>
Genetech Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	7-10 days	60	Send a purchase order directly to our order processing department at: <a href="mailto:orders@genetechpharma.co.uk">orders@genetechpharma.co.uk</a> . For pricing and availability inquiries, hospitals or pharmacies are encouraged to contact: <a href="mailto:sales@genetechpharma.co.uk">sales@genetechpharma.co.uk</a>
Mawdsley's	2.5mg/3ml	Received	2-3 weeks	25	Orders can be emailed to: <a href="mailto:unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk">unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk</a> or via EDI*
QMED Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	3 weeks	60	To order products, Trusts should send PDF purchase orders to: <a href="mailto:orders@qmedpharma.co.uk">orders@qmedpharma.co.uk</a> and <a href="mailto:unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk">unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk</a>
Smartway Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	next day delivery	20	Orders can be sent via email or GHX <sup>^</sup> to our email address: <a href="mailto:ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk">ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk</a>
Tanner Pharma	2.5mg/3ml	Applied for	5-7 days	30	All orders can be placed via email to: <a href="mailto:fbrett@tannerpharma.com">fbrett@tannerpharma.com</a> above

Target Healthcare	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 weeks	60	Orders via email to <a href="mailto:Hospitals@target-healthcare.co.uk">Hospitals@target-healthcare.co.uk</a> for Secondary Care and <a href="mailto:specials@target-healthcare.co.uk">specials@target-healthcare.co.uk</a> for Primary care
-------------------	-------------	----------	-----------	----	---

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:

- salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml (or 2.5mg/3ml) 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	<a href="mailto:andi.swain@nhs.net">andi.swain@nhs.net</a>	Diptyka Hart	<a href="mailto:Diptyka.Hart@uhb.nhs.uk">Diptyka.Hart@uhb.nhs.uk</a>
East of England	James Kent	<a href="mailto:james.kent@nhs.net">james.kent@nhs.net</a>	Tracy McMillan	<a href="mailto:tracy.mcmillan2@nhs.net">tracy.mcmillan2@nhs.net</a>
London	Jackie Eastwood	<a href="mailto:jacqueline.eastwood@gstt.nhs.uk">jacqueline.eastwood@gstt.nhs.uk</a>	Daniel Johnson	<a href="mailto:Daniel.Johnson@gstt.nhs.uk">Daniel.Johnson@gstt.nhs.uk</a>
North East and Yorkshire	David Allwood	<a href="mailto:davidallwood@nhs.net">davidallwood@nhs.net</a>	Penny Daynes	<a href="mailto:penny.daynes@nhs.net">penny.daynes@nhs.net</a>
North West	Richard Bateman	<a href="mailto:richard.bateman@liverpoolft.nhs.uk">richard.bateman@liverpoolft.nhs.uk</a>	Andy Stewart	<a href="mailto:Andrew.stewart@liverpoolft.nhs.uk">Andrew.stewart@liverpoolft.nhs.uk</a>
South East	Alison Ashman	<a href="mailto:Alison.Ashman@berkshire.nhs.uk">Alison.Ashman@berkshire.nhs.uk</a>	Melanie Renney	<a href="mailto:melanie.renney@berkshire.nhs.uk">melanie.renney@berkshire.nhs.uk</a>
South West	Danny Palmer	<a href="mailto:danny.palmer@uhbw.nhs.uk">danny.palmer@uhbw.nhs.uk</a>	Natalie Bryson	<a href="mailto:Natalie.Bryson@uhbw.nhs.uk">Natalie.Bryson@uhbw.nhs.uk</a>

### Scotland

[nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot)

### Wales

[MedicinesShortages@gov.wales](mailto:MedicinesShortages@gov.wales)

### Northern Ireland

[RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net)

All other organisations should send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Medicine Supply Team quoting reference number MSN/2024/028

Email: [DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk).