Department of Health & Social Care

NHS England

Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2024/037

Guanfacine (Intuniv®) 2mg and 3mg modified-release tablets

Tier 2 – medium impact*
Date of issue: 28/03/2024
Link: Medicines Supply Tool

Summary

- Guanfacine 2mg and 3mg modified-release (MR) tablets are out of stock until w/c 6 May 2024.
- Guanfacine 1mg and 4mg MR tablets remain available but cannot support increased demand.
- Switching patients to alternative strengths of guanfacine MR tablets to make up dose will prolong the supply disruptions.
- Unlicensed supplies of guanfacine MR tablets have been sourced, lead times vary.

Actions Required

Clinicians/prescribers in primary and secondary care should:

- not initiate new patients on guanfacine MR tablets until the shortage has resolved;
- proactively identify any patients on guanfacine 2mg and 3mg MR tablets;
- contact patients/carers to establish how much supply they have left, ensuring they are aware of the risks of abrupt withdrawal;
- refer to SPS 'Considerations when prescribing guanfacine' on how to manage patients during the supply disruption;
- consider prescribing unlicensed products; prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary (see supporting information below); and
- if the above option is not considered appropriate, advice should be sought from specialists on management options.

Specialist teams should:

- offer rapid response to primary care teams seeking urgent advice/opinion for the management of affected patients, including those known to be at a higher risk of adverse impact because of these shortages e.g. those with complex presentations including co-morbid autism, mental health or substance misuse needs;
- support patients with a management plan to avoid abrupt withdrawal if they wish to trial a period off treatment or on a reduced dose; and
- offer alternatives in line with NICE guidance where required.

*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

Guanfacine, a selective alpha$_{2A}$-adrenergic receptor agonist, is a non-stimulant licensed for the treatment of ADHD in children and adolescents aged 6-17 years for whom stimulants are not suitable, not tolerated or have been shown to be ineffective. The recommended starting dose is 1 mg once a day, adjusted in increments of not more than 1 mg per week, and individualised according to the patient's response and tolerability; the recommended maintenance dose range is 0.05-0.12 mg/kg/day. NICE guidance recommends this as a treatment option in patients who are intolerant to both methylphenidate and lisdexamfetamine, or who have not responded to separate 6-week trials of both drugs. Patients on guanfacine should be periodically reviewed in line with NICE guidance. Treatment with guanfacine should not be abruptly stopped due to risk of serious withdrawal effects, and in rare instances, hypertensive emergencies (see Considerations when prescribing guanfacine).

Links to further information

BNF: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
NICE guideline [NG87]: ADHD
SmPC: Guanfacine (Intuniv®) MR tablets
Educational Risk Minimisation Materials for Intuniv
Supporting system response to the ADHD medicine shortage
Considerations when prescribing guanfacine
Prescribing available medicines to treat ADHD

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed Intuniv® 2mg and 3mg modified-release tablets (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

- Alium (lead time: 1-2 weeks)
- Chemys (lead time: 2 weeks)
- Durbin (lead time: 2 weeks)
- Smartway (lead time: 1-2 days)
- Target (lead time: 1-2 days)

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:

- Intuniv® 2mg or 3mg modified-release tablets (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**".

Further guidance

Prescribing teams should routinely check the Medicines Supply Tool for up-to-date information on resupply dates for guanfacine MR tablets.

Prescribers and community pharmacies should refer to the NHS Digital guidance on how to use the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) effectively to help patients when there are medicine supply issues.

Enquiries

If you have any queries, please contact DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.