



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2021/016

Voriconazole (VFEND®) 40mg/ml powder for oral suspension

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 25/03/2021

Summary

- Voriconazole 40mg/ml powder for oral suspension is out of stock until late April 2021.
- Patients in primary care with insufficient supply who need continued treatment, should be referred back to secondary care for review.
- Trusts with residual stock should reserve supplies for children 2 to <12 years of age or patients who require administration via enteral feeding tubes.
- Voriconazole 50mg, 100mg and 200mg tablets remain available.
- Unlicensed supplies of voriconazole 40mg/ml oral suspension can be sourced.

Actions Required

Clinicians working in primary care:

- Identify affected patients and for those with insufficient supplies to last until the resupply date, refer back to the initiating clinician for review and management options.

Secondary care pharmacy procurement teams working with the local Medication Safety Officer and clinical teams should:

- review local stock holding of voriconazole 40mg/ml oral suspension and conserve remaining supplies for children 2 to <12 years of age or for patients who require administration via enteral feeding tubes (see supporting information below);
- work with their Regional Pharmacy Procurement Specialists (RPPS) to share stock locally, to ensure continuity of care for the two patient groups detailed above;
- prescribe voriconazole tablets where clinically appropriate in place of voriconazole oral suspension (see supporting information below);
- consider prescribing unlicensed imports, if the above options are not clinically appropriate (see supporting information below);
- seek advice from specialists on management options should a therapeutic switch be required.

Clinicians should ensure appropriate counselling is provided if any changes are made to patients' prescriptions.

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Resources on administration of medication to patients with enteral feeding tubes or swallowing difficulties suggest that voriconazole tablets can be crushed and mixed with water for administration. However, there may be a risk of tube blockage in patients who require administration via enteral feeding tubes. The SPC for voriconazole states that oral dose recommendations for children are based on studies in which voriconazole was administered as the powder for oral suspension; bioequivalence between the powder for oral suspension

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

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

and tablets has not been investigated in a paediatric population. Considering the assumed limited gastro-enteric transit time in paediatric patients, the absorption of tablets may be different in this group compared to adults. It therefore recommends use of the oral suspension in children from 2 to 12 years of age.

Voriconazole is restricted to specialist initiation, therefore, in patients where off-label crushing of tablets or unlicensed imports of oral suspension are not considered appropriate, specialist advice should be sought on an alternative liquid formulation of an appropriate antifungal.

See links below for further information:
[SPCs for voriconazole preparations](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

- The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed voriconazole 40mg/ml oral suspension (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
 - Durbin PLC
 - Mawdsley's Unlicensed
 - Smartway Pharma
 - UL Global Pharma
- Prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary.
- 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 (RPS)
 - [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:
 - Voriconazole 40mg/ml oral suspension (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, who will escalate to national teams if required.

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All other organisations should send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Medicine Supply Team quoting reference number MSN/2021/016.

Email: DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.