Department of Health & Social Care

NHS

Supply Disruption Alert

SDA/2021/007 Issued: 25/06/2021

Dexamethasone 0.1% (Maxidex®) 5ml eye drops

Summary

- There are limited supplies of preserved dexamethasone (Maxidex®) 0.1% eye drops in a multi-dose container until early August 2021 due to a manufacturing issue. During this period stock will only be available to order directly from Novartis and subject to order limits.
- Dexamethasone 0.1% **preservative free** and alternative steroid eye drops remain available in single dose and multi-dose containers and collectively can support an uplift in demand.
- For patients with insufficient supplies until the resupply date, clinicians should consider prescribing an alternative preparation as appropriate.
- Patients who are on long term treatment should be fully counselled if switched to alternative preparations, particularly preservative free single dose preparations, due to the need to dispose of the unit dose after use.

Action

All healthcare professionals in primary, secondary and specialist healthcare services who prescribe Maxidex® should:

- not initiate new patients on Maxidex® - unless there is sufficient supply to complete the course of treatment at the point of prescribing. New patients should be supplied with the full course.
- identify patients with insufficient supplies of Maxidex® until the resupply date and;
- review the patient to decide on the choice of alternative preparation, seeking support from specialists where necessary and;
- ensure patients are counselled appropriately when switching to an alternative dexamethasone preparation or to an alternative product, particularly preservative free single dose preparations, due to the need to dispose of the unit dose after use.

Product details

Maxidex® 0.1% 5ml eye drops

Background

Dexamethasone 0.1% (Maxidex®) eye drops, indicated for the treatment of non-infectious inflammatory conditions affecting the anterior segment of the eye, will be in short supply until early August 2021 due to a manufacturing issue. The 10ml pack size has recently been discontinued and is no longer available.

In order to conserve remaining stock, Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK LTD are supplying directly to customers on an allocation basis; however this supply will not meet national demand. As a result, all patients who are on long term Maxidex® 0.1% will need to be reviewed and switched onto either a dexamethasone 0.1% preservative free preparation or an alternative product until the resupply date.
Organisations who already hold accounts with Novartis can place orders directly via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), email or telephone. Allocation is managed based on factors such as prescriptions held,

stock availability and order history. If an organisation needs to set up a new account, it can be done in one day by emailing Novartis Customer Care: novartis.customercare@novartis.com. A registration form will need to be completed and prescription data may be requested so that products can be released against an allocation.

Supporting Information

Alternative available dexamethasone 0.1% preservative free products:

- Dexafree (dexamethasone) 1mg/1ml eye drops 0.4ml unit dose – Thea Pharmaceuticals LTD
- Dropodex (dexamethasone) 0.1% eye drops 0.4ml unit dose – Rayner Pharmaceuticals LTD
- Minims dexamethasone 0.1% eye drops 0.5ml unit dose – Bausch & Lomb (UK) LTD
- Eythalm (dexamethasone) 1mg/ml eye drops 6ml – Aspire Pharma LTD

Alternative available steroid eye drops:

- Betnesol (betamethasone) 0.1% eye drops 10ml – RPH Pharmaceuticals AB
- Vistamethasone (betamethasone) 0.1% eye drops 5ml and 10ml – Martindale Pharmaceuticals LTD
- Pred Forte (prednisolone) 1% eye drops 5ml and 10ml – Allergan LTD

Supporting clinical information as advised by the Royal College of Ophthalmology:

- consider using prednisolone 1% eye drops for patients post cataract surgery,
- consider using dexamethasone 0.1% preservative free or prednisolone 1% eye drops for management of uveitis flare ups or patients who are immediately post corneal transplant;
- consider using betamethasone 0.1% eye drops for conditions that require less frequent administration such as keratitis, allergic flare ups and longer-term maintenance doses

Further product specific and dosing information is available from the following sources:
SPC Dexafree (dexamethasone) 1mg/1ml eye drops 0.4ml unit dose
SPC Dropodex (dexamethasone) 0.1% eye drops 0.4ml unit dose
SPC Minims dexamethasone 0.1% eye drops 0.5ml unit dose
SPC Eythalm (dexamethasone) 1mg/ml eye drops 6ml
SPC Betnesol (betamethasone) 0.1% eye drops
SPC Vistamethasone (betamethasone) 0.1% eye drops
SPC Pred Forte (prednisolone) 1% eye drops

Distribution

If you are responsible for cascading these alerts in your organisation, these are our suggested distribution lists.

Trusts (NHS boards in Scotland)
CAS and SABS (NI) liaison officers for onward distribution to all relevant staff including:

- A&E consultants
- A&E departments
- A&E nurses
- All departments
- Chief pharmacists
- Clinical governance leads
- Clinical Procurement Specialists
- Community hospitals
- Community nurses
- Community children's nurses
- Day surgery units
- District nurses
- EBME departments
- Emergency Preparedness and Response officer
- Equipment stores
- Equipment libraries and stores
- Hospital pharmacies
- Hospital pharmacists
- Intensive care medical staff/paediatrics
- Intensive care nursing staff (adult)
- Intensive care nursing staff (paediatric)

- Intensive care units
- Intensive care, directors of
- Medical directors
- Neonatal nurse specialists
- Neonatology departments
- Neonatology directors
- NHS walk-in centres
- Occupational health departments
- Outpatient clinics
- Paediatric intensive care units
- Paediatric medicine, directors of
- Paediatric nurse specialists
- Paediatric oncologists
- Paediatric surgeons
- Paediatric surgery, directors of
- Paediatric wards
- Paediatricians
- Paediatrics departments
- Palliative care teams
- Paramedics
- Pharmaceutical advisors
- Pharmacists
- Purchasing managers Risk managers
- School nurses
- Supplies managers
- Walk-in centres

NHS England Regional Offices
For onward distribution to all relevant staff including:
- Community optometrists
- Community pharmacists
- Dispensing opticians
- Optometrists

General Practice
For onward distribution to all relevant staff including:
- General practitioners, General practice managers, General practice nurses

Independent distribution
Establishments registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (England only)
- Adult placement
- Care homes providing nursing care (adults)
- Care homes providing personal care (adults)
- Clinics
- Domiciliary care providers
- Further education colleges registered as care homes
- Hospices
- Hospitals in the independent sector
- Independent treatment centres
- Nursing agencies
- Private medical practitioners

Establishments registered with OFSTED
- Children's services
- Educational establishments with beds for children
- Residential special schools

Enquiries

England
Send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Medicines Supply Team, quoting reference number SDA**/2021/007**

Email: DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk

Addressees may take copies for distribution within their own organisations