

From the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Mrs Cathy Harrison



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

FOR ACTION

Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning and Performance Group (*for onward transmission to relevant staff*)
Chief Executive, Business Services Organisation (*for onward transmission to relevant staff*)
Assistant Director of Integrated Care, Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, SPPG (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*).
Head of General Medical Services, SPPG (*for onward distribution to GP Practices*)
GP Medical Advisers, Strategic Planning and Performance Group.

Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 90 523219
Email: cathy.harrison@health-ni.gov.uk

Date: 28 March 2023

Dear Colleagues,

SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL – PROGYNOVA® TS 100MCG/24H PATCHES

Serious shortage protocols (SSPs) under the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMRs) are an additional tool to manage and mitigate medicines shortages. An SSP enables community pharmacists to supply a specified medicine in accordance with a protocol rather than a prescription, without needing to seek authorisation from the prescriber, saving time for patients, pharmacists and prescribers. They are used in the case of a serious shortage, where a medicine would be likely to be out of stock for some time, and if, in the opinion of ministers, it would help manage the supply situation.

I am writing to inform you that in response to a significant ongoing disruption to the supply of Progynova® TS 100micrograms/24hours transdermal patches, an SSP has today been issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Effective from today, [SSP052](#) provides that for every Progynova® TS 100micrograms/24hours transdermal patch originally prescribed, one FemSeven® 100 patch can be supplied. SSP052, authorised by the Secretary of State on behalf of the four UK nations, has been developed by clinicians and provides pharmacists with procedures to follow in providing this suitable alternative product to help reduce the number of patients having to return to their prescriber for a replacement prescription.

This SSP is due to expire on **Friday 9 June 2023**. Pharmacists should refer to the latest version of this SSP which is now available on the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) website - <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/serious-shortage-protocols-ssps> - and will shortly be available on the Business

Services Organisation (BSO) dedicated page on its website
www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3063.htm

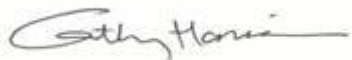
Key Points:

- This protocol does not allow for the quantity supplied to be less than the number of days prescribed on the original prescription.
- There are no SSPs in place for Progynova® TS 50micrograms/24hours transdermal patches – this strength is not currently affected by supply disruptions and should continue to be dispensed in accordance with the prescription.
- SSP052 only allows the substitution of Progynova® TS 100micrograms/24hours transdermal patches.
- The SSP does not allow pharmacists to double up strengths - for example, pharmacists cannot supply 2 x Progynova® TS 50micrograms/24hours transdermal patches against a prescription ordering 1 x Progynova® TS 100micrograms/24hours transdermal patches.
- Community pharmacists should use their professional skill and judgement to decide whether it is reasonable and appropriate to substitute the patient's prescribed order for a supply under this SSP. The patient/carer will also need to agree to supply under the SSP.
- Pharmacists must ensure that the patient's prescriber and/or GP practice is notified when supplying a patient in accordance with this SSP as soon as practically possible, and within 3 working days. Please refer to '[Outline of Operational Guidance for Dispensers in response to issue of a Serious Shortage Protocol](#)' on the BSO website for more information.
- If a patient/carer declines to receive the medicine under this protocol, the pharmacist should use their professional judgement to determine if other courses of action are appropriate whilst taking into consideration wider supply issues. If this does not address their concerns, the patient/carer should be referred back to their prescriber for advice.

Action Required

All relevant staff should be made aware of these SSP's. I would ask the SPPG to bring this information to the attention of GP Practices and Community Pharmacists directly.

Yours sincerely,



Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer