

Pharmaceutical Services, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8DQ
Telephone No. 028 95 36 0333

Medicine Supply Notification: Bisacodyl (Dulcolax®) 5mg suppositories

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 23/10/2023

[Medicines Supply Tool – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

Summary

- Bisacodyl (Dulcolax®) 5mg suppositories are out of stock until w/c 18th December 2023.
- Glycerol 2g (children's size) suppositories remain available but are unable to support any increased demand.
- Relaxit enemas are out of stock without a current resupply date.
- Micralax micro enemas remain available but can only partially support any uplift in demand.
- Unlicensed supplies of bisacodyl 5mg suppositories from special-order manufacturers may be sourced, lead times vary

Actions Required

Where patients have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, clinicians should:

- review patients to determine if this is still the most suitable therapy and route of administration;
- contact your local pharmacy to confirm availability of alternative rectal laxatives, and consider prescribing the alternative if this route is deemed necessary;
- when prescribing bisacodyl suppositories for bowel clearance or radiological procedures consult local guidelines or the unit conducting the procedure for use of alternative agent;
- consider prescribing unlicensed bisacodyl 5mg suppositories from special-order manufacturers, only where licensed alternatives are not appropriate. 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 options are not considered appropriate, advice should be sought from specialists on management options.

Supporting Information

Clinical Information

Bisacodyl is a stimulant laxative. The 5mg suppositories are licensed for use in children aged 4 to 10 years for:

- Treatment of constipation, either chronic or of recent onset, whenever a stimulant laxative is required.
- Bowel clearance before surgery or radiological investigation. Replacement of the evacuant enema in all its indications

To note: Bisacodyl 10mg suppositories are licensed for use in children over 10 years of age. They cannot be halved accurately and must not be used in this way

Please refer to the links below:

- SmPC: Bisacodyl 5mg suppositories [Dulcolax 5 mg Suppositories - Summary of Product Characteristics \(SmPC\) - \(emc\) \(medicines.org.uk\)](#)
- BNFC: Constipation [Constipation | Treatment summaries | BNFC | NICE](#)
- CKS: Management of constipation in children [Scenario: Management | Management | Constipation in children | CKS | NICE](#)
- NICE guideline: Constipation in children and young people: diagnosis and management [Overview | Constipation in children and young people: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed bisacodyl 5mg suppositories (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

- Eaststone
- Target

- 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)