



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

To: All Community Pharmacists

13th December 2024

Dear colleague

Medicine Supply Notification: Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspensions, sugar free
Tier 2 – medium impact

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

Summary

- Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**sugar free**) are out of stock until mid-2025.
- Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**non sugar free**) remain available and can support a full uplift in demand.
- Serious Shortage Protocols (SSP) for cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspensions (**sugar free**) were issued on 10/12/2024.

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Actions Required

Actions for prescribers:

- consider prescribing cefalexin 125mg/5ml or 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**non sugar free**) in the first instance, if appropriate (see Supporting information below); and
- if unsuitable, consider prescribing an alternative antibiotic liquid, with reference to local guidance and allergies.

Actions for pharmacists and dispensing doctors:

Where a prescription for cefalexin 125mg/5ml or 250mg/5ml oral suspension (**sugar free**) is presented and cannot be fulfilled:

- supply an alternative cefalexin oral suspension according to the products specified in [SSP077](#) or [SSP078](#), which will be non sugar free;
- ensure the cautions and exclusion criteria are considered when using an SSP;
- ensure patients/ carers are counselled regarding the substitute product; and
- if the patient is deemed ineligible or does not consent to receive an alternative product via the SSP, they should be promptly referred back to the prescriber.

Individual SmPCs should be checked for cautions, contraindications, and excipients, as these may vary between products.

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free contains sorbitol and the non-sugar free suspension contains sucrose.



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In its position statement on choosing an oral liquid medicine for children, the NPPG considers short-term exposure to sucrose (sugar) in medicines (e.g. a 7-day antibiotic course), where use is not contra-indicated, unlikely to be problematic in most cases, but for long-term therapy, sugar-free preparations are preferred. In patients with diabetes, it considers ingestion of amounts under 5g per dose of medicine unlikely to affect blood sugar control significantly.

Links to further information

[BSO Serious Shortage Protocols](#)

[SmPC cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension, sugar free \(Aurobindo Pharma- Milpharm Ltd\)](#)

[SmPC cefalexin 250mg/5ml oral suspension, sugar free Aurobindo Pharma- Milpharm Ltd\)](#)

[SmPC cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension, non sugar free \(Flynn Pharma Ltd\)](#)

[SmPC cefalexin 250mg/5ml oral suspension, non sugar free \(Flynn Pharma Ltd\)](#)

[BNF Cefalexin](#)

[NPPG Position Statement: Choosing an oral liquid medicine for children](#)