



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

To: All Community Pharmacists

11th July 2025

Dear colleague

Medicine Supply Notification: (Voltarol® Ophtha) 0.1% eye drops 0.3ml unit dose
preservative free
Tier 2 – medium impact

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

Summary

- Diclofenac (Voltarol® Ophtha) 0.1% eye drops 0.3ml unit dose **preservative free** are out of stock until early October 2025.
- Ketorolac 0.5% eye drops, bromfenac 0.9mg/ml eye drops, and nepafenac 1mg/ml and 3mg/ml eye drops remain available and can support increased demand (all contain preservative benzalkonium chloride).
- Diclofenac (Voltarol® Ophtha Multidose) 0.1% eye drops, which also contain benzalkonium chloride, are currently out of stock until late July 2025, but can support increased demand once back in stock. Please refer to the [Medicines Supply Tool](#) for further information.
- Preservative free corticosteroid eye drops remain available.

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Prescribers should not initiate new patients on Voltarol® Ophtha 0.1% eye drops 0.3ml unit dose preservative free until the shortage has resolved and should liaise with pharmacy teams to reserve existing stock for patients considered unsuitable for preservative containing formulations.

For new patient initiations and existing patients who have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, prescribers should review on a case-by-case basis to determine suitability of switching to a **preservative containing** non-steroidal anti-inflammatory eye drop, and if suitable:

- consider prescribing ketorolac 0.5% eye drops or bromfenac 0.9mg/ml eye drops or nepafenac (1mg/ml or 3mg/ml) eye drops; diclofenac (Voltarol® Ophtha Multidose) 0.1% eye drops will be another option once back in stock in late July 2025.
- when prescribing these products, refer to local formulary/guidance and treatment history, noting their use may lead to off label prescribing in some instances (see Supporting information and refer to SmPC for dosing, contraindications, cautions and excipients); and
- consider if measures to reduce risk of irritation in those prescribed a **preservative containing** preparation is needed, including switching other eyedrops being used to preservative free formulations, and the use of lubricating eye drops if eyes become itchy/dry.

If the above options are not suitable, specialist advice should be sought on management

Actions Required

Supporting information

Clinical Information

NSAID eye drops have a common mechanism of action but vary in their licensed indications and marketed uses. Of the licensed NSAID eyedrops, only Voltarol® Ophtha 0.1% eye drops 0.3ml unit doses are preservative free.

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Product	Voltarol® Ophtha 0.1% eye drops 0.3ml unit dose preservative free	Voltarol® Ophtha Multidose	Ketorolac trometamol 0.5% w/v eye drops, solution	Yellox® 0.9 mg/ml eye drops solution	Nevanac® 1mg/ml and 3mg/ml eye drops suspension*
Active ingredient	Diclofenac		Ketorolac	Bromfenac	Nepafenac
Licensed indication(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhibition of peroperative miosis during cataract surgery 2. Treatment of post-operative inflammation in cataract surgery 3. Control of ocular pain/discomfort associated with corneal epithelial defects after excimer PRK surgery or accidental non-penetrating trauma 4. Control of inflammation after Argon Laser Trabeculoplasty 5. Relief ocular signs/symptoms of Seasonal Allergic Conjunctivitis 6. Treatment of inflammation/ discomfort after strabismus surgery 7. Treatment of ocular pain/discomfort after radial keratotomy 		Prophylaxis and reduction of inflammation and associated symptoms following ocular surgery	Treatment of postoperative ocular inflammation following cataract extraction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention and treatment of postoperative pain and inflammation associated with cataract surgery 2. Reduction in risk of postoperative macular oedema associated with cataract surgery in diabetic patients

*Once-daily dosing with 3 mg/ml eye drops provides the same total daily dose of nepafenac as three-times-daily dosing with 1 mg/ml eye drops

Benzalkonium chloride is the most widely used preservative in eyedrops. It may have an adverse effect on the ocular surface in some patients, especially with use of multiple eye drops containing preservatives, and with chronic exposure, leading to pain and discomfort.

Links to further information

[SmPC Voltarol® Ophtha Unit Doses](#)

[SmPC Voltarol® Ophtha Multidose](#)

[SmPC Ketorolac trometamol 0.5% eye drops](#)

[SmPC Yellox® 0.9 mg/ml eye drops solution](#)

[SmPC Nepafenac](#)

[BNF Eye, allergy and inflammation](#)

[NICE CKS Conjunctivitis – allergic](#)