



# Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2020/008

Lorazepam (Ativan<sup>®</sup>) 4mg/ml injection (Pfizer)

Tier 2 – medium impact\*

Date of issue: 20/02/2020

## Summary

- Pfizer have limited supplies of lorazepam 4mg/ml injection so will be restricting orders direct to pharmacies in line with 50% historical demand between now and w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- Pfizer anticipate going fully out of stock by 6<sup>th</sup> March.
- Resolution date: w/c 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- Importers can source limited supplies of unlicensed imports of lorazepam 4mg/ml injection, however, the average lead time is 4-6 weeks.
- NOTE: there are insufficient supplies of Diazemuls<sup>®</sup> to support; please do not use in place of Ativan<sup>®</sup> injection (see UKMI memo for further information – link below).

## Actions Required

### Primary care:

Community pharmacies should:

- Use up their stock of Ativan<sup>®</sup>; and
- place orders directly with Pfizer for Ativan<sup>®</sup> to meet patient demand until the Pfizer re-supply date;

### Secondary care:

Trust pharmacy procurement teams should:

- assess local stock holding of Ativan<sup>®</sup> injection;
- consider centralising stock at pharmacy;
- if further stock is required, place orders directly with Pfizer for Ativan<sup>®</sup> and only order 50% of normal usage requirements for the next two weeks;
- consider placing orders now for unlicensed imports; and
- contact your Regional Pharmacy Procurement Specialist who may facilitate sharing stock between Trusts to ensure continuity of care for patients.

If, once steps above have been taken the Trust is still likely to have a gap in supply, pharmacy procurement teams should work with clinical colleagues and the local Medicines Safety Officer (MSO) to:

- agree priority indications for which remaining/available lorazepam will be reserved; and
- consider and agree alternatives for indications/patients where appropriate as per UKMI memo – link below).

## Supporting Information

- UKMi have prepared a Clinical Memo to support the management of this supply issue: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/shortage-of-ativan-lorazepam-injection-4-mg-in-1-ml/>
- The following specialist importers have indicated they can source unlicensed lorazepam 4mg/ml injection, but lead times range from 4-6 weeks (please note, there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
  - Alium Medical
  - Clinigen
  - Mawdsleys
  - Waymade
  - WEP Clinical
- 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.
  - [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC),
  - [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
- When prescribing a product that is not licensed in the UK prescribers must indicate on the FP10 prescription that an unlicensed product is required. This can be done by annotating the prescription with the following wording: “**special order**”.

## Enquiries

Enquiries from primary care should be directed to [DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk).

Enquiries from NHS Trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to your Regional Procurement Lead and who will escalate queries to national teams if required.

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