



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2025/032

Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml elixir

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 20/05/2025

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

Summary

- Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **elixir** (500ml) is out of stock until late June 2025.
- Specials of phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **oral solution** and phenobarbital 15mg/5ml **oral suspension** remain available (see Supporting information)

Actions Required

Prescribers should not initiate patients on phenobarbital 15mg/5ml elixir until the supply issues have resolved.

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

- review patients and consider prescribing Specials of phenobarbital 15mg/5ml oral solution or oral suspension, checking the list of excipients and pharmaceutical differences to ensure suitability for patient (see Supporting information); and
- advise patients that they are receiving the same drug therapy but from a different manufacturer to avoid a break in treatment, and to report signs indicating a potential loss of seizure control and/or new/worsening side effects.

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml elixir is licensed for the treatment of all forms of epilepsy except absence seizures. It is a category 1 antiepileptic drug where patients should be maintained on a specific product as clinically relevant differences between different manufacturers' products might occur, even when the pharmaceutical forms are the same and bioequivalence has been shown. However, in the event of a shortage, maintaining treatment with another manufacturer's product is necessary to avoid treatment interruption and potential loss of seizure control.

Links to further information

[SmPC: Phenobarbital 15mg/5ml Elixir](#)

[BNF: Phenobarbital](#)

[BNF: Epilepsy treatment summaries](#)

*Classification of Tiers can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-guide-to-managing-medicines-supply-and-shortages/>

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed medicines

The following Specials manufacturers have confirmed they can source unlicensed phenobarbital 15mg/5ml oral liquid, solution or suspension. Please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies:

Supplier	Formulation	Lead time	Pack sizes available	Shelf life	Pharmacy ordering process
Eaststone	Oral suspension	Next working day	Any	90 days expiry	If pharmacy has an account, need to place order via Eaststone online portal. If pharmacy does not have an account, email: lucy.kirkpatrick@eaststone.co.uk
IPS Pharma	Oral solution (alcohol and sugar free)	Next working day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 200ml • 400ml • 500ml 	33 days from manufacture	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up. IPS Pharma - contact: Orders@ips-pharma.com
Nova Laboratories	Oral liquid (alcohol free)	Orders placed before 12pm will be manufactured for delivery on the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml 	6 months	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up. Novo Laboratories – contact: sales@novalabs.co.uk (takes approx. 24 hours to set up). Order form is emailed for completion.
Nova Laboratories	Oral suspension (alcohol and sugar free)	Orders placed before 12pm will be manufactured for delivery on the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 150ml • 200ml • 300ml • 500ml 	12 weeks from the date of manufacture	Pharmacy needs to have an account set up Novo Laboratories – contact: sales@novalabs.co.uk (takes approx. 24 hours to set up). Order form is emailed for completion.
Rokshaw Laboratories	Oral solution (alcohol and sugar free)	Depending on pack size and how much is ordered - this could be the next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150ml • 200ml • 500ml 	90 days from manufacture	If pharmacy has an account, need to place order via Rokshaw's online portal. If pharmacy does not have an account, email: orders@rokshaw.co.uk , requesting for an order form to complete.
SyriMed	Oral solution	Next day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 500ml 	90 Days	Contact number: 0808 178 1914 https://www.bnsgroup.co.uk/login Email Order - specials@thamelabs.co.uk
SyriMed	Oral suspension	Next day delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100ml • 500ml 	90 days	Contact number: 0808 178 1914 https://www.bnsgroup.co.uk/login Email Order - specials@thamelabs.co.uk

The full list of excipients should be requested from each supplier and reviewed for appropriateness as these can vary.

Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust or local governance procedures. Unlicensed imports do not undergo any central quality assessment or suitability evaluation. Therefore, any import must be locally assessed in line with local unlicensed medicines processes. 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),

Enquiries

If you have any queries, please contact DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.