Department of Health & Social Care

NHS England

Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2025/035

Venlafaxine 37.5mg modified release tablets

Tier 2 – medium impact*
Date of issue: 13/06/2025
Link: Medicines Supply Tool

Summary

- Venlafaxine 37.5mg modified release (MR) tablets are out of stock until mid-July 2025.
- Venlafaxine 37.5mg MR capsules remain available and can support increased demand.
- Venlafaxine 37.5mg immediate release (IR) tablets remain available and can support increased demand.
- Venlafaxine 37.5mg/5ml and 75mg/5ml oral solution remains available and can both support a partial increase in demand.

Actions Required

Prescribers should not initiate new patients on venlafaxine 37.5mg MR tablets until the shortage has resolved.

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

- ensure the shortage does not lead to abrupt cessation of venlafaxine treatment; and
- consider prescribing venlafaxine 37.5mg **MR capsules**, ensuring that the patient is not intolerant to any of the excipients and is counselled on the change in formulation.

If the patient does not wish to take MR capsules due to the gelatin content, review the patient's dose to determine if the patient is on the appropriate dose, and consider prescribing venlafaxine **IR tablets** if appropriate (see supporting information), noting that this may be off-label for some indications, and ensuring:

- no intolerance to excipients or issues adhering to a twice daily dosing regimen, and
- patients are counselled on the change in formulation and dosing regimen, and to report any adverse effects or change in treatment efficacy.

If dose of venlafaxine cannot be provided by IR tablets, consider prescribing venlafaxine **oral solution,** if appropriate (see supporting information), taking into account the same considerations as for use of IR tablets.

If the above options are not considered appropriate, advice should be sought from specialists on management options.

Supporting information

Licensed daily doses of venlafaxine vary between indications and range from 37.5mg to 375mg. Only the modified release formulations are licensed to treat anxiety disorders.

*Classification of Tiers can be found at the following link:
https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-guide-to-managing-medicines-supply-and-shortages/

Venlafaxine is associated with a higher risk of withdrawal effects (for example, gastrointestinal disturbances, headache, anxiety, dizziness) than other antidepressants. Treatment should not be stopped abruptly.

Table 1 –Venlafaxine formulations

Formulation	Licensed indications	Dose frequency*	Comments
MR tablet MR capsule	• Treatment of major depressive episodes, generalised anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, and panic disorder, with or without agoraphobia. • Prevention of recurrence of major depressive episodes.	**Once a day**	A small cohort of patients may not wish to switch to venlafaxine MR capsules for cultural or religious reasons, as the capsules contain gelatin.
IR tablet Oral solution	• Treatment of major depressive episodes. • Prevention of recurrence of major depressive episodes.	**Twice a day**	When switching from an MR to IR preparation, the total daily dose is the same but it is administered in two divided doses. Venlafaxine oral solution contains some excipients which are associated with cautions: • Sodium methyl and sodium ethyl parahydroxybenzoate (E219 and E215) – may cause allergic reactions (possibly delayed) • Liquid maltitol – patients with rare hereditary problems of fructose intolerance should not take this medicine To reduce the risk of confusion and dosing/administration errors, prescribers should not switch between the two different strengths of oral solution.

Links to further information

BNF Venlafaxine
SmPC Venlafaxine 37.5mg prolonged release tablets
SmPC Venlafaxine 37.5mg prolonged release capsules
SmPC Venlafaxine 37.5 mg tablets
SmPC Venlafaxine 37.5mg/5ml Oral Solution
SmPC Venlafaxine 75mg/5ml Oral Solution

Enquiries

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