



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2026/016

Co-trimoxazole 40mg/200mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free

Co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg/5ml oral suspension

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 25/02/2026

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

Summary

- Co-trimoxazole 40mg/200mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free will be out of stock from mid-March until June 2026.
- Co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg/5ml oral suspension is out of stock; resupply date is to be confirmed.
- Co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg and 160mg/800mg tablets remain available and can support increased demand.
- Unlicensed supplies of co-trimoxazole oral suspension may be sourced, lead times vary.

Actions Required

Until supply issues resolve, clinicians/prescribers in primary and secondary care should:

- reserve remaining supplies of co-trimoxazole oral suspensions for patients with enteral feeding tubes or on part doses not deliverable by co-trimoxazole tablets;
- in all other patients requiring co-trimoxazole, consider prescribing co-trimoxazole tablets, using either half a tablet or a full tablet to deliver the required dose; tablets may be crushed (see Supporting Information)
- consider prescribing unlicensed co-trimoxazole oral suspension only where licensed alternatives are not available. Prescribers should work with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times may vary.

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

Supporting information

Clinical Information

Use of co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg or 160mg/800mg strength tablets:

- For a 40mg/200mg dose give HALF of a co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg tablet (off-label manipulation)

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

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

- If the patient is unable to swallow tablets, they may be crushed and mixed in a small amount of water/apple puree/soft food before administration (off-label manipulation)
- For patients on enteral feeding tubes there is an increased risk of tube blockage if crushed/dispersed tablets are used so this is not recommended

Links to further information:

[SmPC - Co-trimoxazole 40mg/200mg/5ml oral suspension](#)

[SmPC - Co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg/5ml oral suspension](#)

[SmPC – Co-trimoxazole tablets](#)

[BNF – Co-trimoxazole](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

The following specialist importers have confirmed they can source unlicensed co-trimoxazole oral suspension.

Co-trimoxazole 40mg/200mg/5ml and 80mg/400mg/5ml preparations have been sourced, please confirm with importer if a particular formulation type is required, for example sugar free formulation.

(Please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

- Alcatia Pharma
- Alium Medical
- Genetech Pharmaceuticals
- Mawdsleys Unlicensed
- Tanner Pharma
- Target Healthcare

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:

- [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),

When prescribing a product that is not licensed in the UK due to a supply issue with the licensed alternative prescribers must indicate on the FP10 prescription that an unlicensed product is required. This can be done in one of the following two ways:

- Electronic prescriptions – if the required unlicensed product is shown on electronic prescribing systems, GPs should select:
 - co-trimoxazole 40mg/200mg/5ml oral suspension (imported)
 - co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg/5ml oral suspension (imported)
- Paper prescriptions – where the unlicensed product is not shown on electronic prescribing systems, GPs should use a paper prescription and annotate with the following wording: “**special order**”.

Enquiries

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

REGION	Lead RPPS	Email	Associate RPPS	Email
Midlands	Andi Swain	andi.swain@nhs.net	Diptyka Hart	Diptyka.Hart@uhb.nhs.uk
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All other organisations should send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Medicine Supply Team quoting reference number MSN/2026/016

Email: DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk.