



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2021/055

Atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 18/11/2021

Link: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/shortages/shortage-of-atorvastatin-20mg-chewable-tablets-sugar-free/>

Summary

- Lipitor® 20mg chewable tablets are out of stock until late December 2021.
- Lipitor® 10mg chewable tablets remain available but cannot support a full uplift in demand.
- Atorvastatin 20mg film-coated tablets also remain available and can support an increased demand.
- A Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) was issued on 17/11/2021.
- Supplies of atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension Specials can also be sourced. Lead times vary.

Actions Required

- For patients with insufficient supplies, community pharmacists may supply atorvastatin 20mg film-coated tablets in accordance with the SSP for eligible patients.
- If the above option is not deemed appropriate, clinicians should consider
 - working with local pharmacy teams to understand the availability of Lipitor® 10mg chewable tablets and where available, issue a prescription to make up the dose, ensuring that the patient is counselled on the appropriate dose;
 - prescribing atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension (unlicensed special);
 - where the above options are not suitable, prescribe atorvastatin 20mg film-coated tablets for patients who are able to crush tablets and disperse in water (off label use; see supporting information below).

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

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

Supporting information

- Please see the [link for further information on the Lipitor® 20mg chewable tablets SSP](#)

Guidance on ordering and prescribing Specials

- The following Specials companies have confirmed they can manufacture atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension (please note there may be other companies that can also manufacture supplies):
 - BCM Specials
 - Eaststone Specials
 - Lexon
 - Nova Laboratories
 - Quantam Pharmaceuticals
 - Rokshaw
 - 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),

Clinical Information – Crushing tablets

SPS MI have advised that according to NEWT guidelines and Handbook Drug Administration via Enteral Tubes:

- Atorvastatin film-coated tablets can be crushed and mixed with water for administration, they are not very soluble and a residue may be left. Please note, this is an unlicensed practice.
- Crushed tablets should be taken immediately as atorvastatin is light sensitive.

Please refer to the BNF and SPCs for further information on alternative preparations:

- [Atorvastatin \(Lipitor®\) 20mg chewable tablets SmPC](#)
- [Atorvastatin 20 mg Film Coated Tablets SmPCs](#)
- [Atorvastatin BNF](#)

Enquiries

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