

### **Alendronic acid 70mg tablets - shortage**

A shortage of **alendronic acid 70mg tablets** has been identified. At present we understand this will be out of stock until end August 2022. The information below has been produced in collaboration with the Rheumatology specialist service to support the management of patients for the duration of the shortage.

#### **Prescribing in NHS Grampian**

- Prescribing data (e-data) estimates that almost 6000 patients within NHS Grampian are currently prescribed alendronic acid 70mg tablets (at a dose of one tablet per week).

#### **Formulary status**

- Within NHS Grampian alendronic acid 70mg tablets are the first-choice bisphosphonate for both men and women for the management of osteoporosis.
- Risedronate sodium 35mg tablets are also listed in the Grampian Area Formulary for the management of osteoporosis in both men and women.

#### **Stock information & availability**

- Alendronic acid 70mg tablet are out of stock, with a re-supply date of end-August 2022.
- Risedronate sodium 35mg tablets remain available.

#### **Actions for primary care**

Practices **should not** proactively switch any patients currently prescribed alendronic acid 70mg tablets. Given the duration of the shortage, patient personal stock and stock within the community pharmacy network may mean that not all patients will require an intervention.

Advice from Rheumatology is dependent on the duration of alendronic acid treatment. As such, primary care teams will need to review patient notes (when necessary) to confirm when treatment was started and then, if clinically appropriate to do so, select the most appropriate action from the list below:

##### **New bisphosphonate patients**

- Any patient who requires commencement on a bisphosphonate should be prescribed risedronate sodium 35mg tablets (one tablet per week).

##### **Patients who have been on alendronic acid for less than two years**

- A temporary switch should be undertaken to risedronate sodium 35mg tablets (one tablet per week).

- Once the shortage has been resolved, patients should be switched back to alendronic acid 70mg tablets.
- Patients should be advised to order their normal repeat prescription the next time it is required.

**Patients who have been on alendronic acid for more than two years & less than five years**

- Due to duration of action, patients can omit medication for up to two months (8 weeks) as they will still have bone turnover suppression.
- Advise patient that their community pharmacy will hold their repeat prescription and that their community pharmacy will advise them how they can check when supplies become available.

**Patients who have been on alendronic acid for more than five years**

- Alendronic acid 70mg tablets should be stopped and patient should be referred for a repeat DXA scan. No bisphosphonate to be prescribed until scan results are available.