

Temazepam (10mg & 20mg) tablet shortage

Shortage information

It has been identified that there are ongoing supply issues with temazepam tablets (10mg & 20mg). At present we understand this to be an ongoing issue for the remainder of 2022. It is expected that there will be intermittent supplies available during this time period.

Prescribing in NHS Grampian

Over 600 patients are currently prescribed temazepam within NHS Grampian. Several of these patients appear to be using temazepam long term and in some cases prescribing is off-label (dose and indication).

Stock information & availability

- Anticipated re-supply date for both strengths of temazepam is currently December 2022.
- Temazepam 10mg/5ml oral solution remains available however this **cannot** support the uplift in demand.
- Unlicensed supplies of temazepam 10mg tablets can be sourced. Where this option is being considered the [NHS Grampian Specials Process](#) should be followed and consideration given to the MHRA document '[The supply of unlicensed medicinal products \("specials"\)](#)'.
- Other benzodiazepine and non- benzodiazepine hypnotics remain available should prescribing of these be deemed appropriate.

Formulary status

- Temazepam is included in the [Grampian Area Formulary](#) for use in sleep disorders.
- It is highlighted that hypnotics should only be used when insomnia is severe, using the lowest dose for the shortest period of time.

Licensed indications

- Short-term treatment of insomnia
- Premedication before minor surgical and investigative procedures particularly when hospital admission is not essential.

Actions for primary care:

New patients:

- No new patients should be prescribed temazepam 10mg or 20mg tablets.
- Consult the [Grampian Area Formulary](#) for information on the management of sleep disorders, giving due consideration to non-pharmacological measures being first-line recommended management.
- Where appropriate, consider recommending [Sleepio](#) app for support in managing sleep.

Current patients:

Ascertain prescribed indication and consider if it is appropriate to offer the opportunity to reduce and potentially discontinue treatment.

Where discontinuing treatment is not deemed appropriate:

- An individual patient review should be undertaken to make a decision about the most clinically appropriate course of action (please see [further information](#) below).
- There is no particular hypnotic which would be considered a direct alternative to temazepam, as such an individualised approach should be taken to assess current prescribed and non-prescribed medications alongside current diagnoses to make an informed decision on how to proceed.
- Where patients are under the supervision of a specialist service e.g. substance misuse service, psychiatry, advice should be sought in advance of any changes to medication being made.

Where discontinuing treatment is agreed with the patient.

- The [NHS Grampian Guideline for the Safe Prescribing of Benzodiazepines and Z-drugs](#) should be consulted to ensure all aspects impacting on reduction/discontinuation are considered (section 5) and that an appropriate reducing regimen is put in place (section 6).
- Where the patient has been using temazepam long-term, abrupt withdrawal should be avoided.
- Where patients are under the supervision of a specialist service e.g. substance misuse service, psychiatry, advice should be sought in advance of any changes to medication being made.

Sleepio

- Sleepio is now instantly available free to all residents in Scotland, offering evidence-based cognitive behavioural techniques (CBT) for the management of insomnia via mobile and web, without the need for in-person appointments.
- In May this year, NICE issued the following recommendation relating to Sleepio “Sleepio is recommended as a cost saving option for treating insomnia and insomnia symptoms in primary care for people who would otherwise be offered sleep hygiene or sleeping pills”. This links with our own [formulary](#) recommendations of using non-pharmacological measures as first link in the management of sleep disorders.
- To support in the management of insomnia, Sleepio can be offered to both newly diagnosed patients prior to pharmacological treatment, and those who are already diagnosed and receiving pharmacological treatment as a support tool.
- Details on how to refer can be found via the following [link](#).

Further information

- [Shortage of Temazepam 10mg and 20mg tablets – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#) (log on required)
- [Benzodiazepine Prescribing Guidance \(nhsgrampian.org\)](#)
- [Insomnia | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE](#)
- [Scenario: Benzodiazepine and z-drug withdrawal | Management | Benzodiazepine and z-drug withdrawal | CKS | NICE](#)
- [Sleepio referral](#)

Patient resources

- [Benzodiazepines and Z Drugs | Sleeping Tablets | Patient](#)
- [Insomnia causes & treatments - Illnesses & conditions | NHS inform](#)
- [Sleepio onboarding](#) (patient postcode required)