

Group A Strep / availability of oral antibiotic liquids – out of hours services and community pharmacies.

As you will be aware there are ongoing and evolving challenges with the availability of liquid antibiotics, in particular phenoxymethylpenicillin and amoxicillin oral solutions linked to the increased prevalence of Group A Strep and reduced thresholds for prescribing.

Over the course of the weekend, where there will be no access to GP practices, there is a need to maintain communication between professional services to ensure timely supplies of appropriate medicines.

Actions for out of hours services (GMED):

- It is advised that where practicable, out of hours prescribers should make contact with the patient's nominated community pharmacy, to ascertain medicine stocks prior to prescribing (this is to reduce the risk of delaying treatment due to lack of availability).
- Prescribers are asked to consider prescribing solid oral dosage forms (tablets/capsules) where this would be appropriate for the patient.
- Prescribers should be aware that the [Specialist Pharmacist Service](#) have information relating to dispersing or crushing a range of solid oral antibiotics used for Strep A which could be considered where appropriate for patient and dose would allow.
- Patients/carers should be made aware when being provided with a prescription, that while at the time of prescribing stock supplies were available this cannot be guaranteed.
- Patients/carers should be reassured that if they cannot source the prescribed medicine than their community pharmacy will support them in receiving a timely supply of an alternative.

Actions for Community Pharmacy:

- Patients/carers **should not be** sent away without prescribed medication or means to receive an appropriate alternative.
- Consider whether you need to over-ride your automated ordering systems if you have blocks in place due to tariff prices. Antibiotic prices have risen significantly due to the spike in demand, but this does not negate a pharmacy's contractual responsibility to make a supply in response to a prescription.
- A reminder to report all medication shortages via CPS [here](#).
- Consider alternative strengths or formulations you may have available of the antibiotic prescribed to fulfil the prescription (that would be suitable for the patient) e.g. a child who is prescribed a liquid but is able to swallow tablets.
- Where an alternative pharmacy is known to have stocks of the prescribed antibiotic, contact should be made to confirm this is still accurate and patients/carers can be referred.

- Where no alternative formulation or strength is available, contact with the GMED prescribing service should be made without delay via 01224 558002. Prior to making contact it would be of benefit to have details of antibiotic liquids available as this will allow the prescriber to make an informed decision with regard to an alternative.
- Where an alternative recommendation is made, Universal Claim Framework (CPUS service) can be used to process and supply medicine to prevent any delays to commencing treatment.
- Pharmacies are advised to make records where an alternative product has been supplied (on consultation with a prescriber) or where no supply has been possible and what actions have been taken – e.g. you have contacted a neighbouring pharmacy who can supply to the patient.