

Shortage of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT)

Information for Healthcare Practitioners

National Patient Safety Alert

The department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England have issued a National Patient Safety Alert covering the Shortage of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT).
NatPSA/2024/007/DHSC

[CAS-ViewAlert \(mhra.gov.uk\)](https://www.mhra.gov.uk/cas-view-alert)

The alert is for action by all organisations involved in prescribing and dispensing pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy. The alert details the reasons for the supply disruptions and states the following actions which are to remain in place only until the supply issues have resolved.

Clinicians should:

1. Prescribe a maximum of one month's supply of PERT for all patients at a time.
2. Prioritise available Creon® 10,000 capsules for patients unable to take Creon® 25,000 capsules.
3. Prioritise remaining stock of Nutrizym® 22 capsules for patients unable to tolerate Creon® capsules.
4. Where PERT is prescribed for indications other than cystic fibrosis, clinicians and prescribers should consider: -
 - a. Prescribing a proton pump inhibitor or H2 receptor antagonist to optimise efficacy.
 - b. If a dose reduction may be suitable for patients based on severity of symptoms
 - c. Where symptoms remain despite a dose of $\geq 10,000$ units lipase / kg / day or 100,000 units lipase with a meal, whether other causes of the symptoms should be investigated
 - d. Prescribing medication to manage symptom control.
5. Prescribe unlicensed imports of PERT only where licensed alternatives are unavailable, working with local pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames.
6. Immediately refer patients to a specialist for advice on alternative treatments if the above options are not suitable.

Pharmacists

Pharmacists presented with a repeat prescription for PERT should only supply the equivalent to one month's supply in accordance with the relevant serious shortage protocol.

Further information and Actions

In addition to the actions detailed in the NatPSA alert and reproduced above the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board PERT Shortages group has the following suggests / advice.

Prescribers

1. When prescribing PERT, If possible, please specify the usual daily dose the patient takes rather than prescribing as directed because this helps pharmacies supply sufficient medicine to cover one month's supply.
2. Where possible primary care prescribers should avoid sending patients to secondary care to source stock. Sending patients to secondary care is likely to exacerbate issues with stock being in the incorrect location and thereby prolonging the supply issues.
3. Please either you or your team ask local community pharmacists what stock they can get and prescribe accordingly.

Pharmacists

1. Viatris, the maker of Creon, has indicated there is sufficient product in the system to meet 90% of demand. However, this may not be in the correct location. We are therefore asking secondary care pharmacy teams to only order directly from Viatris. We have also asked that they cancel any back orders they have with the wholesalers.
2. Pharmacists dispensing PERT in the community should look to source their medication directly from the wholesales.
3. Pharmacists dispensing in the community should try to avoid sending patients to secondary care organisations to get a medication supply. In doing so, the issues with stock being in the incorrect location will be exacerbated. NB If a patient is showing obvious symptoms as a result of being unable to source PERT, then in these cases it may be appropriate to refer a patient to secondary care for supply.

Additional Information

The Pancreatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland has produced a position statement on PERT Shortage which can be accessed at: -

<https://www.psgbi.org/position-statement-pert-shortage/>

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NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board Pharmacy PERT Shortages Group