

# Specials Prescribing Advice

**Eight specials items below have a projected annual cost of £80,914.08, which accounts for £6,742.84 of the total monthly special spend. This bulletin has been produced to support MMT staff in influencing change at practice level. See reverse for more information.**

## 1. INDOMETACIN LIQUID 25mg/ml x 150ml

**Change to an alternative to save an average cost of £105.76 per prescription, projected annual saving is £15,174.60.**

It is best practice to recommend a licensed alternative over an unlicensed product if this is clinically appropriate. The UKMI guidance suggests if possible to use a licensed medicine in a suitable formulation (e.g. dispersible tablets or liquid or suppositories)

Indomethacin, normally prescribed for pain and moderate to severe inflammation in rheumatic disease and other acute musculoskeletal disorders.

- A licensed alternative is Indometacin 100mg suppositories but these may vary significantly in the dose requirement;
- an alternative unlicensed liquid Indopaed from IDIS 25mg/ml x 100ml at £15.80, should be considered.  
[www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php](http://www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php)

## 3. LORAZEPAM LIQUID 500mcg/5ml x 150ml or 300ml

**Change to a licensed alternative to save an average cost of £103.44 per prescription, projected annual saving is £4,965.**

Lorazepam is used as a sedative, hypnotic, anticonvulsant and a muscle relaxant.

Suggested alternatives; .

- The licensed anxiolytic such as Diazepam oral solution;
- Lorazepam tablets do dissolve in water over 1 to 5 minutes the prescription should include the instruction 'mix and dissolve with water and take....'

## 5. PREGABALIN LIQUID 150mg/5ml x 400ml

**Change to an alternative to save an average cost of £1656.87 per prescription, projected annual saving is £39,764.88.**

Pregabalin is normally prescribed for peripheral and central neuropathic pain or as an adjunctive therapy for partial seizures. This liquid is **DOUBLE RED LISTED** in the primary care setting for Cambridgeshire. Consider pregabalin capsules 25mg or 50mg which can be opened and dispersed in water. Please note that the dispersed capsule may have an unpleasant taste.

Ref: [www.cambsphn.nhs.uk](http://www.cambsphn.nhs.uk)

## 2. CAPTOPRIL LIQUID 25mg/5ml x 95ml

**Change to an alternative to save an average cost of £54.47 per prescription, projected annual saving is £653.64.**

This medication is normally prescribed for hypertension and heart failure in children yet it has a very short shelf life of 28 days. Suggested alternatives are;

- Captopril tablets which will disperse in water. These come at a strength of 12.5mg and 25 mg at cost of £1.44 and £1.66 respectively for a pack of 56 tablets. Ref: [www.eoecph.nhs.uk/Pharmaceutical\\_specials.pdf](http://www.eoecph.nhs.uk/Pharmaceutical_specials.pdf)
- Captopril Liquid of the same strength obtained at a price of £31.28/100ml from Nova Laboratories.

## 4. MAGNESIUM OXIDE CAPSULES 500mg x 56

**Change to a licensed alternative to save an average cost of £364.38 per prescription, projected annual saving is £4,372.56.**

It is normally prescribed for hypomagnesium, though there is no clinical licensed indication for any unlicensed medicines. Magnesium Oxide in the form of Tablets could be considered as an alternative at a cost of £24.30 for 500mg x 100 tablets from Puritans Pride Pharmaceuticals via IDIS.

[www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php](http://www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php)

A further alternative is to use Magnesium Glycerophosphate tablets 4mmol (Magnaphate) x 100 for a cost price of £20.96 from AAH or Unichem.

## 6. DOSULEPIN HCL LIQUID 25mg/5ml x 500ml

**Change to a licensed alternative to save an average cost of £213.49 per prescription, projected annual saving is £5,123.76.**

Please note that the shelf life for this product is only 3 months and decreases to 30 days after opening. [www.martindalepharma.co.uk](http://www.martindalepharma.co.uk) . This product is normally prescribed for depressive illness particularly where sedation is required. Before prescribing an unlicensed medicine, prescribers should consider a licensed alternative as indicated by the UKMI guidance. [www.ukmi.nhs.uk](http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk) . For Depressive Illness: NICE guidelines for the management of depression state that patients should NOT be commenced or continued on Dosulepin. Please consider licensed Citalopram oral drops or an alternative licensed tricyclic antidepressant: see Amitriptyline or Lofepamine. [www.cambsphn.nhs.uk](http://www.cambsphn.nhs.uk). **NB.** Citalopram 40mg/ml oral drops equate to 4 drops(8mg) a 15ml pack at £20.16.

**7. AMITRIPTYLINE HCL S/F Liquid 10mg/ml x 100ml**

Change to an alternative to save an average cost of £68.70 per prescription, projected annual saving is £3,297.60.

The item is normally prescribed for neuropathic pain. A licensed alternative could be obtained from Rosemont at a cost of £17.20/150ml, thereby obtaining more quantity at a lower cost. The product produced by Rosemont has a 24 months shelf-life (unopened).

**8. MERCAPTOPYRINE Capsules 10mg x 90**

Change to an alternative to save an average cost of £315.08, projected annual saving is £7,561.92.

This medication is normally prescribed for Inflammatory Bowel Disease, please note this is an unlicensed indication. An alternative more cost effective source of the unlicensed product is IDIS pharmaceuticals at a cost of £58.70 for 10mg x 50 capsules giving substantial cost savings.

[www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php](http://www.idispharma.com/pharmacist-contact-us.php)

**Table of cost comparisons of equivalent products:**

(Note: In all cases, review indication and clinical need. Liaise with community pharmacists prior to change)

No	Product	Average Cost	Change to	Supply	Price	Variance per prescription	Projected annual cumulative saving
1	Indometacin Liquid 25mg/ml 150ml	£105.76	Indometacin Liquid 25mg/ml x 100ml	Indopaed via IDIS	£15.80	£89.96	£7,556.64
2	Captopril Liquid 5mg/5ml 95ml	£54.47	Captopril Tablets 12.5mg or 25mg  Captopril Liquid 25mg/5ml x 100ml	AAH or Unichem  Nova Laboratories	£1.44 or £1.66 respectively  £31.28 x 100ml	£53.03  [£23.19]	£636.36  [£278.28]
3	Lorazepam Liquid 500mcg/5ml 150ml or 300ml	£103.44	Lorazepam Tablets 1mg or 2.5mg	AAH or Unichem	£8.28 or £15.08 respectively	£95.16	£4,567.68
4	Magnesium Oxide Capsules 500mg x 56	£364.38	Magnesium Glycerophosphate (Magnaphate) tablets Magnesium 4mmol/tablet *Confirm indication for hypomagnesaemia	AAH or Unichem	£20.96 for 50 tablets	£343.42	£4121.04
5	Pregabalin Liquid 150mg/5ml 400ml	£1,656.87 <b>DOUBLE RED LISTED</b>	Pregabalin Capsules 25mg or 50mg x 56	AAH or Unichem	£64.40 or £96.60 respectively	£1,592.47	£38,219.28
6	Dosulepin HCL Liquid 25mg/5ml x 500ml	£213.49	Citalopram Oral drops 40mg/ml x 15ml	AAH or Unichem	£20.16	£193.33	£4,639.92
7	Amitriptyline HCL S/F 10mg/5ml x 100ml	£68.70	Amitriptyline HCL S/F 50mg/5ml x 150ml	Rosemont	£17.50	£33.50	£2457.76
8.	Mercaptopurine Capsules 10mg x 90	£315.08	Mercaptopurine Capsules 10mg x 50	IDIS pharmaceuticals	£58.70	£256.38	£3,076.56
<b>NB: Community pharmacies can easily open an account with both Nova Laboratories and with IDIS by a simple approach of completing a form and returning it by fax. Furthermore no added cost for delivery would be charged from IDIS for a supply greater than £30.00, though Nova Laboratories will charge a carriage price of £7.50. Although, this would still prove to be cheaper in relation to the current captopril liquid used.</b>						Sub-total:	£65275.25