



Attention: General practitioners, practice managers and practice nurses

Dear colleague,

22 September 2017

Re: Shortage of hepatitis B vaccines - recommendations for general practice

Further to our previous correspondence, the shortage of hepatitis B vaccine continues to impact on the UK supply and this situation is likely to continue until early 2018. To ensure that stock is available for those individuals at highest and most immediate risk of exposure to hepatitis B, Public Health England (PHE) has developed [temporary recommendations](#) to support clinicians undertaking an individual risk assessment.

The ordering restrictions instituted by both vaccine manufacturers, in collaboration with PHE and the Department of Health (DH), appear to be reducing demand for lower priority groups and therefore supplies are improving. Supply of paediatric monovalent hepatitis B vaccine and of high dose vaccine for renal patients (HBVaxPro40® and Fendrix®) is now available and should be sufficient for the rest of 2017 if use is restricted to the correct patient group.

After discussion with the BMA's General Practitioners Committee, we have agreed that general practice will only be able to order vaccine to address the needs of individual patients. Therefore maximum ordering quantities (MOQs) per month for general practices will remain low or zero for all products. Currently the only vaccines which can be ordered for stock are the renal vaccines – limited to three doses per month. Because of this, patients requiring urgent post-exposure hepatitis B vaccination will need to be referred to urgent care, A&E or GUM services (as appropriate) for an assessment.

Practices will be able to make exceptional orders above the MOQ for patients in the higher risk categories including babies born to hepatitis B infected mothers, renal patients and follow up of individuals who commenced a post-exposure course elsewhere. To order, simply tell the company which patient category you wish to vaccinate and stock will be despatched on the next working day.

- For GSK contact: customercontactuk@gsk.com or 0800 221 441 option 2.
- For MSD contact: AAH customer services on 0344 5618899 for normal orders; AAH will direct the requester to call MSD customer services on 01992 452094 for exceptional orders above ordering restrictions.

Routine childhood programme: hexavalent combination vaccine (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB)

The hexavalent vaccine (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB) now used in the routine childhood immunisation programme is not affected by these supply constraints and can be used for the eight week dose in babies born to hepatitis B infected mothers.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Mary Ramsay

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