**Shortage of Alendronic Acid 70mg Tablets – Information for Healthcare Professionals**

**Date:** 12\textsuperscript{th} July 2022

**Description of products affected**

Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets is licensed for the treatment of post-menopausal osteoporosis and reduces the risk of vertebral and hip fractures\textsuperscript{1}. In the local formulary, it is approved for use in accordance with NICE TA464\textsuperscript{2} - Bisphosphonates for treating osteoporosis.

**Background**

- There have been ongoing supply problems with Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets.
- It is unclear when this supply issue will resolve.
- The availability of Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets is being monitored closely by the Medicines Optimisation Team. The Department of Health and Social Care is due to publish guidance imminently on this shortage. Once guidance is published, we will be reviewing our local recommendations and issue further information as required.
- The following manufacturers have been contacted and they have provided information on stock availability of Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets:
  - Aurobindo Pharma-Milpharm: Currently available and in stock
  - Organon Pharma UK Limited: Out of stock with no return date set
  - Accord Healthcare Limited: Out of stock, possible resupply in September 2022

**Suggested management options**

**For patients currently prescribed Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets**

- Aurobindo Pharma-Milpharm has confirmed stock availability of Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets and we are aware of some pharmacies being able to obtain supplies from their wholesalers. Therefore, patients should be encouraged to try several pharmacies to fulfil the prescription as different pharmacies use a range of wholesalers and distributors. The patient may wish to ring pharmacies in advance of attending to ascertain availability.

- If Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets are unavailable from local pharmacies, then the preferred option is to change the patient’s prescription to Risedronate 35mg tablets (once weekly) which are currently available.
• In the Systemwide formulary Risedronate 35mg tablets is a once weekly tablet and is the second line formulary choice in primary care. It is approved for:
  
  o Treating postmenopausal osteoporosis to reduce risk of vertebral or hip fractures.
  o Treating osteoporosis in men at high risk of fractures.
  o Approved for use in accordance with NICE TA464 - Bisphosphonates for treating osteoporosis.

• Any patients switched to Risedronate 35mg tablets should be counselled on:
  
  o Starting the tablet on the day of the week that their next Alendronic Acid 70mg tablet is normally taken and due. It is important that patients are recommended to commence on Risedronate 35mg tablets once their supply of Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets has been depleted and advised that these treatments should not be taken together. Weekly treatment with Risedronate 35mg tablet is to replace their weekly treatment with Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets.
  o Swallowing the tablets whole with a full glass of water; on rising, take on an empty stomach at least 30 minutes before first food or drink of the day.
  o Avoiding food and drink for at least 2 hours before or after risedronate (particularly avoid calcium-containing products e.g., milk; also avoid iron and mineral supplements and antacids).
  o To aid delivery of the tablet to the stomach Risedronate 35mg tablet is to be taken while in an upright position with a glass of plain water (>120 ml). Patients should not lie down for 30 minutes after taking the tablet.

• It is important to involve any patients (and their carers, as appropriate) in the discussion regarding any planned change to their medication BEFORE making the change and ensure that they are counselled appropriately.

For patients newly started on a Bisphosphonate
• No new patients should be started on Alendronic Acid 70mg tablets.
• Risedronate 35mg tablets should be considered as the alternative bisphosphonate option during the supply issue and the patient counselled on how to take tablets in line with the above advice.

References
1. Alendronic Acid 70 mg tablets - Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC)
3. Risedronate 35mg Tablets- Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC)

Acknowledgements
Document agreed and prepared in collaboration with members from:
• Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
• North West Anglia Foundation Trust
• Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Pharmaceutical Committee.
**Disclaimer:** The content of this memo may not reflect national guidance. Some of this memo is based on clinical opinion from practitioners. Users should bear this in mind. Any decision to prescribe off-label must take into account the relevant GMC guidance and governance procedures for unlicensed medicines. Prescribers are advised to pay particular attention to the risks associated with using unlicensed medicines. Prescribers are advised to pay particular attention to the risks associated with using unlicensed medicines or using a licensed medicine off-label. As with all prescribing, the prescriber is medically and legally responsible for the prescriptions they sign and for their decisions and actions when they supply and administer medicines or authorise or instruct others to do so.

**Document Management**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date approved</td>
<td>12th July 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date placed on ICS website</td>
<td>12th July 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date</td>
<td>12th July 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number</td>
<td>V1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>