How do I obtain more of this unlicensed medicine?

If you need to continue with your medicine after leaving hospital, the hospital Doctor may ask your GP to prescribe it for you. If your GP is unable to do this for any reason or your Community Pharmacist cannot get the unlicensed medicine, please contact the hospital Pharmacy (see details on back of this leaflet) for advice.

It is important that you take the medicine as directed on the label. If you have any side effects or concerns, you should discuss them with the Doctor responsible for your care.

Always allow at least 7 days for your Doctor and/or Pharmacist to obtain further supplies of the required unlicensed medicine.

Useful Contact Details

Medicines Information Helpline
Monday to Friday 12 noon – 5pm
01494 425355
bucks.medicinesresourcecentre@nhs.net

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Patient information leaflet
If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call PALS on 01296 316042
Why do medicines have a licence?

In the UK all medicines undergo a process of checks (such as clinical trials) to ensure they are safe and effective. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency grants licences for medicines when they pass such checks in this country. The licence (also known as the “Marketing Authorisation”) for a medicine will be specific for treating a particular condition or range of conditions. When a medicine is used for a condition not stated in its license, it is said to be “unlicensed” or being used “off label”

When and why is an “unlicensed” medicine used?

Your doctor may have prescribed an unlicensed medicine for you if:

• They believe that this medicine would work well for your condition even though it is licensed for a different condition.
• The medicine is not available in the UK and we have purchased it from another country which has equivalent high standards of licensing as the UK.
• The medicine is normally available in one form, such as a tablet, and your Doctor thinks that a liquid form is better for you – this will have to be made up as a “special” medicine, so it will be “unlicensed”
• They have chosen to use a product that is safe but may not be classified as a medicine and so would not have been through the medicine licensing process.

What does this mean for me?

Your Doctor will consider the medical evidence available when prescribing an unlicensed medicine and will inform you of any likely side effects. There may not be a patient information leaflet in English available but if possible we will try to get one for you.

If you would like more information about the medicine, please ask your Doctor or Pharmacist. They may be able to provide a leaflet about your condition or provide details of relevant support groups.

What if I don’t want to take this medicine?

If you have any concerns about your medicine or treatment, please speak to your Doctor or Pharmacist as they will be able to explain what your options are. With some unlicensed medicines you are requested to give your consent in writing before you can start taking them. If you do agree, you can change your mind any time thereafter.

Why are some children’s medicines unlicensed?

Many medicines are only tested on adults. Therefore, they will not have a licence for use in children. There are processes in place to review medicines to decide what is best to treat children and young people. Your Doctor or Pharmacist will be able to tell you if the medicine prescribed for your child is commonly used in children.