



# Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2024/041

## Cefalexin 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspension

Tier 2 – medium impact\*

Date of issue: 10/04/2024

Link: [Medicines Supply Tool](#)

### Summary

- Cefalexin 125mg/5ml oral suspension is out of stock from mid-April until early-July 2024.
- Cefalexin 250mg/5ml oral suspension is out of stock from late-April until early-July 2024.
- Cefalexin 250mg tablets are out of stock until early-May 2024.
- Cefalexin 250mg and 500mg capsules remain available and can support an increase in demand.
- Cefalexin 500mg tablets remain available and can support an increase in demand.
- Cefaclor (Distaclor<sup>®</sup>) 125mg/5ml and 250mg/5ml oral suspensions remain available but can only support a partial uplift in demand.
- Cefuroxime (Zinnat<sup>®</sup>) 125mg/5ml oral suspension remains available and can support an increase in demand.
- Alternative liquid formulations of antibiotics remain available.

### Actions Required

Prescribers should:

- review patients to determine if cefalexin oral suspension is the most suitable antibiotic for the infection being treated;
- confirm whether the patient can take solid oral dosage forms and consider prescribing cefalexin capsules or tablets where required, if they can deliver the dose prescribed; and
- if the above option is not suitable, consider prescribing an alternative cephalosporin oral suspension (e.g. cefaclor or cefuroxime, if appropriate) or liquid formulation of an alternative antibiotic, in line with local treatment guidelines, seeking specialist microbiology advice, where needed.

### Supporting information

#### Clinical Information

##### Licensed indication

Cefalexin is a 'first generation' cephalosporin licensed for the treatment of the following infections due to susceptible micro-organisms: respiratory tract infections, otitis media, skin and soft tissue infections, bone and joint infections, genito-urinary infections, including acute prostatitis and dental infections.

\*Classification of Tiers can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-guide-to-managing-medicines-supply-and-shortages/>

## Urinary tract infections

Children aged 3 months or older may be prescribed cefalexin oral suspension as a second line treatment of acute lower urinary tract infections, as per [NICE guidance NG 109](#).

A dose of 125mg of cefalexin is an off-label regimen for UTI prophylaxis. [NICE guidance NG112](#) lists cefalexin as a second-choice oral antibiotic for prophylaxis of recurrent UTI in both people aged 16 years and over (125 mg at night) and children aged 3 months to 15 years (12.5 mg/kg at night, maximum 125 mg per dose).

[NICE guidance NG 109](#) and [NICE guidance NG112](#) on antimicrobial prescribing for lower urinary tract infection and recurrent urinary tract infection, respectively, list alternative antibiotics that can be considered in these settings.

### Off label manipulation of cefalexin solid dosage forms

The Handbook of Drug Administration via Enteral Tubes points out that crushing cefalexin tablets or opening cefalexin capsules should be avoided due to risk of sensitisation to cephalosporins.

### Links to further information

[SmPC: Cefalexin](#)

[BNF: Cefalexin](#)

[BNF: Cephalosporins](#)

[SmPC: Cefaclor \(Distaclor®\) oral suspension](#)

[SmPC: Cefuroxime \(Zinnat®\) oral suspension](#)

[NICE guidance \(NG112\): Urinary tract infection \(recurrent\) - antimicrobial prescribing](#)

[NICE guidance \(NG109\): Urinary tract infection \(lower\) - antimicrobial prescribing](#)

## Enquiries

If you have any queries, please contact [DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk).