

Med-E-Mail February 2024

National Patient Safety Alert – Shortage of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers

A [National Patient Safety Alert](#) was published recently as salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid is in very limited supply and there is currently no known resupply date. The required actions in the alert are to be completed as soon as possible and not later than **8th March 2024**.

Only patients under the care of a Respiratory Specialist team should be using nebulisers for long term management of asthma and COPD. Medication for nebulisers should not be prescribed unless on the recommendation of a respiratory specialist and patients are advised not to purchase a nebuliser.

The MHRA issued a [Drug Safety Update](#) in August 2022 which advised that nebulised asthma rescue medication should not be prescribed to children and young people for use at home unless under specialist medical supervision. The use of nebuliser devices at home to deliver asthma rescue medication to this age group, without specialist medical supervision, can mask a deterioration in the underlying disease, which could result in delays in seeking medical attention and have fatal or serious consequences.

Consider using high-dose salbutamol pressurised metered-dose inhaler (pMDI) via a large volume spacer in patients with mild to moderate asthma attacks or COPD as an alternative to salbutamol nebulisers – see [alert](#) for further details.

Action for Healthcare Professionals:

- Review need for, and appropriateness of, home nebuliser use. If deemed necessary, determine if the patient has sufficient supplies of nebuliser liquid at home before issuing repeat prescriptions.

Please contact your ICB pharmacist for further information