

9 March 2018

**To** Wholesalers; New Zealand Pharmacy

**Subject** Powdered food supplements update

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Good afternoon,

Following ongoing stock issues with Ensure and Fortisip powdered food supplements, PHARMAC is making changes to the listing of these products on the Pharmaceutical Schedule, and working closely with suppliers to help manage the situation.

New Zealand pays some of the lowest prices for medicines anywhere in the world. However, this means that in some cases, products that are funded (particularly those which can also be purchased over the counter) are being exported overseas for a higher price. For products like powdered food supplements, lack of availability adversely affects patients who are unable to consume normal foods and rely on powdered food supplements for nutrition.

Patients and pharmacy continue to tell us they're unable to obtain Ensure or Fortisip powdered food supplements, despite supplier information indicating there is sufficient stock in the country to meet patient demand. To address the problem, we're changing the price and pack size of some products, and working with suppliers to help them carefully manage the release of stock into the supply chain.

We'd like to thank everyone for their patience and support in helping manage these issues, and for considering patient impacts when ordering oral feed products.

#### **Nutricia Fortisip oral feed powder (vanilla) – new pack size**

We have listed a new pack size for **Nutricia Fortisip oral feed powder (vanilla)**:

- **857 g pack size:** a new bigger pack size was listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule on **1 March 2018**
- **350 g pack size:** this pack size will be delisted **from 1 August 2018**.

The two products are nutritionally equivalent but there are some differences in the average amounts of each component, as follows:

<b>Pack size</b>	<b>350 g</b>	<b>857 g</b>
<b>Schedule status</b>	Delisted from 1 August 2018	Listed from 1 March 2018
<b>Energy (kJ per 100 g)</b>	1835 kJ	1736 kJ
<b>Protein (per 100 g)</b>	21.9 g	20.8 g
<b>Carbohydrate (per 100 g)</b>	53.5 g	61 g
<b>Fat (per 100 g)</b>	14.5 g	9.4 g

**Nutricia** will be providing further information to prescribers on the new pack size.

Nutricia has recently provided information about ordering its products. This is attached for your reference.

### **Ensure powders**

The supplier of Ensure, Abbott, has released a one-off allocation of stock to assist in building a buffer of stock. It's also reviewing stock volumes being released to ensure it's considering organic growth in the market. We ask pharmacy to continue to work with their wholesalers to help manage stock for eligible patients.

To help better understand the market for Ensure powders, any information about usage for New Zealand patients that isn't on a prescription or via DHB hospitals would be appreciated. You can send this information to PHARMAC or directly to Abbott. This will help ensure the right amount of stock is being released for New Zealand patients.

Abbott is also happy to be contacted directly if you have any information about the potential exporting of this product from New Zealand. This information will assist them with minimising the impact on New Zealand supply.

If you have any questions, please contact us on [enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz) or 0800 660 050.

Kind regards,



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