



10 April 2019

To All New Zealand Pharmacies, Wholesalers

Subject Levodopa with carbidopa

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Good afternoon

This update is to let you know that Merck Sharpe and Dohme (MSD) has recently advised PHARMAC of a supply issue affecting levodopa with carbidopa (Sinemet) due to MSD experiencing a manufacturing delay.

PHARMAC is currently working with MSD and other suppliers to ensure alternatives are available. These are as follows:

Tab 100 mg with carbidopa 50 mg (immediate release)

MSD will exhaust its stock of Sinemet in mid-April. Mylan New Zealand has stock of its brand "Kinson" available. Kinson is currently listed fully funded in the Pharmaceutical Schedule and is registered with Medsafe.

You can reassure your customers that the Kinson brand has the same active ingredient as the Sinemet brand and has the same therapeutic effect. This means Kinson should have the same effect as Sinemet. It has been evaluated by Medsafe to ensure it is safe and works the same way.

Tab 250 mg with carbidopa 25 mg (immediate release)

MSD has sourced United States packaged stock of Sinemet 250/25. This will be supplied as a registered medicine via a labeling exemption. It will be supplied via the existing listed Pharmacode in the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

Tab long-acting 200 mg with carbidopa 50 mg

MSD will exhaust its remaining stock of tab long-acting 200/50 in late-April. We anticipate there is likely to be a small amount of stock remaining in the distribution chain but appreciate that this is not enough to sustain the market.

We are making arrangements with Mylan for it to supply an alternative half strength presentation (tab long-acting 100 mg with carbidopa 25 mg), under the brand name "Mylan". This is not registered so will need to be supplied under Section 29 of the Medicines Act. This Mylan brand will be fully funded from 1 May 2019.

We appreciate this will result in an additional pill burden for patients, who will need to take double the usual number of pills in order to remain on the same dose of treatment, and we apologise for the inconvenience that this may cause. The half strength presentation will be supplied until at least August 2019 when we anticipate that stock of a tab long-acting 200 mg with carbidopa 50 mg may become available. We will provide a further update closer to the time.

If you required further information about the medicines and changes to these, this is available on PHARMAC's website: [The facts about generic and biosimilar medicines](#).

We apologise for the inconvenience that these stock issues cause and thank you for your assistance in managing this to ensure that New Zealanders continue to have access to the treatments they need. If you have any concerns or questions relating to this, please contact either:

Merck Sharpe and Dohme on 0800 660050, or

PHARMAC at enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz or call 0800 660 050.

Kind regards



Lisa Williams
Director of Operations