



Medicine Supply Notification

MSN/2021/049

Mesalazine (Asacol[®]) 800mg MR gastro-resistant tablets

Tier 2 – medium impact*

Date of issue: 6/10/2021

Summary

- Asacol[®] 800mg MR gastro-resistant tablets are out of stock from early October 2021 with a resupply date to be confirmed.
- Asacol[®] 400mg MR gastro-resistant tablets remain available but cannot support full demand for the Asacol[®] 800mg strength tablets.
- Octasa[®] MR 400mg and 800mg tablets remain available and can support full demand for the Asacol[®] 800mg strength tablets.
- Other mesalazine tablet preparations, with different release characteristics, remain available should there be difficulties sourcing Octasa[®] MR tablets or Asacol[®] 400mg MR tablets.

Actions Required

For patients with insufficient supplies, clinicians should consider the following options:

- prescribing Octasa[®] 800mg MR tablets and reassuring patients that this is a similar preparation to Asacol[®] 800mg MR gastro-resistant tablets;
- only prescribing two Asacol[®] 400mg MR gastro-resistant tablets if Octasa[®] 800mg MR tablets are not considered suitable, and counselling patients on dosing;
- referring to the [SPS Q&A document](#) for further information on licensed indications and dosing of other brands of mesalazine tablets, if there are difficulties sourcing Octasa[®] MR tablets or Asacol[®] 400mg MR tablets, or they are not considered appropriate, taking into account different release characteristics, as well as local policies, guidelines and formularies, and counselling patients on any new product prescribed;
- monitoring patients for disease control and tolerability of treatment after switching products and ensuring they are maintained on this brand if the switch is successful; and
- deferring initiating any new patients on Asacol[®] 800mg MR gastro-resistant tablets until the supply issue is resolved.

Supporting Information

Alternative mesalazine tablet preparations

The [BNF](#) states '*there is no evidence to show that any one oral preparation of mesalazine is more effective than another; however, the delivery characteristics of oral mesalazine preparations may vary*'.

*Classification of Tiers can be found at the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-guide-to-managing-medicines-supply-and-shortages/>

Octasa[®] MR tablets were launched after publication of the BNF statement; they are a branded generic version of Asacol[®] tablets and have virtually the same in vitro dissolution profile, pH for release, site of drug release and same formulation.

Alternative products	Stock status
Interchangeable mesalazine tablet preparations	
Octasa [®] MR 800mg tablets (also available in 400mg and 1600mg strengths)	In stock
Asacol [®] 400mg MR gastro-resistant tablets	In stock but cannot support full demand for the Asacol [®] 800mg strength tablets
Other mesalazine tablet preparations	
Zintasa [®] EC 400mg tablets	In stock
Salofalk [®] 250mg tablets, 500mg gastro-resistant tablets and 1g gastro-resistant tablets	In stock
Pentasa [®] 500mg and 1g slow release tablets	In stock

Please refer to the following links for further information on alternative preparations:

[Asacol[®] SPC](#)
[Octasa[®] SPC](#)

[Zintasa[®] SPC](#)
[Salofalk[®] SPC](#)
[Pentasa[®] SPC](#)
[Mesalazine BNF](#)

[SPS Q&A document - What are the differences between different brands of mesalazine tablets?](#)

Enquiries

If you have any queries, please contact DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk