

# **Information for patients and carers**

## **Unlicensed Medicines**

## Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because you have been prescribed a medicine that is “unlicensed”. This leaflet aims to answer most of the frequently asked questions relating to the use of “unlicensed” medicines.

## What is an “unlicensed” medicine?

A medication that does not have a full U.K. pharmaceutical product license is described as an “Unlicensed Medication”. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) grants licenses when medicines pass checks to ensure they are safe and effective.

Unlicensed medicines are used based on individual clinical need when a licensed product is not available to treat your condition.

## Why do some medicines not have a license?

There are a number of reasons why a medicine may be unlicensed in the UK:

- It may be waiting for a licence to be granted by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- It may still be undergoing testing in a clinical trial
- The need for the medicine may be so limited that it is not economic for the manufacturers to apply for a licence (which is an expensive process)
- The medicine may be licensed in another country, and needs to be imported to the UK
- The medicine needs to be made up as a 'special product' because it is not readily available (this is often the case for liquid formulations of medicines which only have a licence for the tablet form)

# Why have I been prescribed an unlicensed medicine?

Sometimes your medical team will recommend you take a medicine that is not currently licensed in the UK. This is because they think the medicine is likely to be effective and the benefits outweigh any associated risk.

## Are unlicensed medicines safe to take?

Your prescriber will consider all medical evidence available before prescribing an unlicensed medication. No medicine is completely free of side-effects and your prescriber will balance any risk of these against any benefits you may get, in consultation with you.

## How to obtain a further supply

Usually, the hospital will prescribe your unlicensed medicine(s) and make sure you have a regular supply. Your GP may prescribe some unlicensed medications.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Pharmacy Department: **01772 522484** (Monday – Friday: 9am- 5pm).

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

Follow us on social media @lancshospitals

**Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.**

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**

**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

**Department:** Pharmacy

**Division:** Diagnostic and Clinical Support

**Production date:** May 2025

**Review date:** May 2028

**JR 1305 v1**