

# Memo - shortage of supply

To: All Trust staff  
From: Pharmacy  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Re: Depakote (valproate semi-sodium) 250mg and 500mg tablets

### Description of product affected

Depakote 250mg and 500mg tablets have been out of stock recently and only limited supplies of Depakote tablets are available.

### Alternative agents and management options

- In-patient prescribing: Syonell (valproate semi-sodium tablets) is the alternative brand in stock. See SPC of Syonell for further information: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/search?q=%22Syonell%22>
- Out-patient prescribing: Any alternative brand to Depakote supplied from community pharmacies.
- The MHRA have confirmed that brand prescribing of valproate tablets for treatment of manic episodes in bipolar disorder (sole licensed indication) is not necessary as per NICE clinical guideline for Bipolar Disorder (CG185): <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg185>

### Action

- For in-patient prescribing, clinicians can prescribe valproate semi-sodium tablets generically. The alternative brand Syonell is available at Oxford Health.
- For out-patient prescribing on FP10 prescriptions, clinicians can prescribe valproate semi-sodium tablets generically which enables community pharmacies to dispense any alternative brand to Depakote.
- Dose changes and additional monitoring are not required when switching between different brands of valproate semi-sodium tablets when used for bipolar disorder.
- Clinicians should avoid initiating treatment with Depakote for new patients. Refer to the Trust formulary on prescribing sodium valproate for more information on first-line recommendations: <http://www.oxfordhealthformulary.nhs.uk/docs/vol%2014%20no%201%20Valproate%20for%20bipolar%20disorder%20-%20formulary%20status%20reminder%202016v2.pdf?UNLID=709320580202042011231>.
- Patient reassurance may be needed due to differences in packaging of each brand.
- Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) of valproate is a mandatory requirement when prescribing any brand of valproate.

### Original document prepared by:

Medicine Supply Notification [MSN/2020/010]. Valproate semisodium (Depakote®) 250mg and 500mg tablets, issued 28/02/2020. Department of Health and Social Care.

### Document modified by:

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