

15 April 2008

Listing of Respigen (salbutamol 100 mcg aerosol inhaler)

Summary

PHARMAC will be fully subsidising the Respigen brand of salbutamol asthma inhaler from 1 June 2008. Respigen is a CFC-free aerosol inhaler containing the asthma reliever drug salbutamol at 100 micrograms (μg) per dose. Also from that date, the subsidy for the other funded brands of salbutamol inhaler will be reduced to match the subsidy on Respigen.

What the change means for patients

Three funded brands of salbutamol 100 μg inhaler will be available from 1 June 2008 — Ventolin, Salamol and Respigen.

Respigen will be fully funded. Salamol and Ventolin will have their subsidy reduced to match the subsidy on Respigen, and as a result may have a surcharge (depending on the response by the suppliers).

If you are using Salamol or Ventolin when these changes occur, and if Salamol and Ventolin incur a part-charge which you would prefer not to pay, then you can choose to change to Respigen. You should talk to your doctor or pharmacist about changing.

What the change means for health professionals

Three funded brands of salbutamol 100 μg inhalers will be available from 1 June 2008 — Ventolin, Salamol and Respigen.

Respigen will be fully funded. Salamol and Ventolin will be reference-priced to Respigen. This may result in Salamol and Ventolin having a manufacturer's surcharge.

People who are using Salamol and Ventolin at the time of the change may elect to switch to Respigen to avoid paying the surcharge. PHARMAC will send out information to help pharmacists and prescribers explain the changes to patients.

Respigen contains and delivers the same amount of salbutamol as Salamol and Ventolin. Medsafe has registered Respigen on the basis that it is bioequivalent to Ventolin.

We continue to recommend that prescriptions are written generically to ensure that the patient can make the choice about which product to obtain in consultation with their pharmacist.

More information

More details on the listing of Respigen and changes to the subsidy of other brands of salbutamol 100 μg CFC-free aerosol inhaler can be found on the following page.

If you have any further questions about these changes, you can call our toll-free number (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) on 0800 66 00 50.

Details of the listing and related changes

The details are summarised in the table below.

Product	Chemical	Presentation	Pack Size	Current Price†	Current Subsidy	Subsidy from 1 June 2008
Respigen	Salbutamol	Aerosol inhaler, 100 µg per dose CFC-free	200 dose OP	\$3.80*	-	\$3.80
Salamol	Salbutamol	Aerosol inhaler, 100 µg per dose CFC-free	200 dose OP	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$3.80
Ventolin	Salbutamol	Aerosol inhaler, 100 µg per dose CFC-free	200 dose OP	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$3.80

* The price for Respigen applies from 12 May 2008

†All prices are expressed ex-manufacturer, excluding GST.

Feedback received during consultation

We sent out a consultation letter about these changes in November 2007. The key themes raised during the consultation and our response to the feedback are summarised below.

We appreciate the feedback we received and acknowledge the time people took to respond. We considered all the responses in making the decision.

Theme	Response
Introducing another brand of salbutamol inhaler might cause confusion among patients.	Respigen has a similar appearance to Ventolin, which has been available for many years. We will be providing information to health professionals to inform people about the change.
Is there sufficient usage experience with Respigen?	Respigen has been marketed overseas under the brand name Gerivent. PHARMAC will make resources available to health professionals to help them discuss the change with patients.
Because Respigen contains ethanol, it may be unsuitable for children.	Ethanol is used as a solvent in many medicines that are used by children. The amount of alcohol in Respigen is too small to be harmful. For comparison, the amount of ethanol in Respigen is less than the amount that naturally occurs in a glass of orange juice.
Respigen is unknown in New Zealand and there is not enough	Respigen has been assessed by Medsafe as being equivalent to Ventolin. Respigen contains salbutamol,

information to show that it is equivalent to Ventolin.

the same medicine as contained in Ventolin and Salamol, and at the same dosage strength.

We will be providing information to health professionals to help them discuss the change with patients.
