

CORRECTION July 2025 Tender notification

24 March 2026

- Amendment to the Principal Supply Status date for cefalexin monohydrate caps 250 mg and cap 500 mg as cefalexin monohydrate is an additional stock pharmaceutical. Therefore, Pharmac must provide a seven-month initial transition period.

Corrections in ~~strike through~~ and additions in **bold** below.

Correction to July 2025 Tender Notification [PDF, XX KB]

What we're doing

Pharmac is announcing recent decisions from its annual tender process. This notification includes:

- decisions on medicines following our additional round of consultation, for medicines where Pharmac was considering a possible brand change
- a summary of the feedback we received from the consultation.

Brand changes will begin to take effect from September 2025.

Pharmac's annual tender process allows suppliers to bid to be the main supplier of off-patent medicines. This year's tender is expected to free up between \$30 million and \$50 million, which will be reinvested into funding new treatments.

Following feedback from last year's brand changes, Pharmac introduced a new consultation step to better engage with stakeholders. We consulted on the impact of potential brand changes and this feedback helped shape our decisions. Nearly 30 individuals and groups responded, highlighting the importance of clear communication and support during transitions between brands.

The table below summarises the outcome for each medicine included in the May consultation.

Medicine	What medicine is used for	Outcome
Amoxicillin cap 500 mg	A penicillin antibiotic that is used to treat bacterial infections.	Brand change
Bisacodyl tab 5 mg	for short-term relief of constipation.	Brand change
Cefalexin monohydrate cap 250 mg	A cephalosporin antibiotic used to treat a variety of bacterial infections.	Brand change
Cefalexin monohydrate cap 500 mg		Brand change
Cefalexin monohydrate grans for oral liq 25 mg per ml, and 50 mg per ml		Still under consideration
Cefalexin monohydrate grans for oral liq 50 mg per ml		Still under consideration

Celecoxib cap 200 mg	A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medicine used to relieve pain and inflammation.	Brand change
Chloramphenicol eye drops 0.5%	used to treat bacterial eye infections	Brand change
Citalopram hydrobromide tab 20 mg	A selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) medicine which is used to treat depression.	Still under consideration
Colchicine tab 500 mcg	used to treat and prevent gout attacks and other inflammatory conditions.	Still under consideration
Compound electrolytes with glucose [dextrose]	used to treat dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, and provide a source of calories.	Brand change
Daptomycin inj 350 mg – 500 mg	a lipopeptide antibiotic used to treat serious bacterial infections.	Still under consideration
Dexamethasone phosphate inj 4 mg per ml, 1 ml	a corticosteroid used to reduce inflammation and suppress the immune system.	Still under consideration
Dexamethasone phosphate inj 4 mg per ml, 2 ml		Still under consideration
Docusate sodium with sennosides tab 50 mg with sennosides 8 mg	used to treat constipation.	Brand change
Droperidol inj 2.5 mg per ml, 1 ml	used to prevent nausea and vomiting that may occur after surgery or diagnostic procedures.	Brand change
Enalapril tab 5 mg	An angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor. It's used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension) and heart failure.	Brand change
Enalapril tab 10 mg		Brand change
Enalapril tab 20 mg		Brand change
Ethinylestradiol with levonorgestrel tab 20 mcg with levonorgestrel 100 mcg and 7 inert tabs	A combination hormonal contraceptive used to prevent pregnancy.	Still under consideration
Ethinylestradiol with levonorgestrel tab 30 mcg with levonorgestrel 150 mcg		Still under consideration

Ethinylestradiol with levonorgestrel tab 30 mcg with levonorgestrel 150 mcg and 7 inert tabs		Still under consideration
Ferrous Sulphate tab long-acting 325 mg	An iron supplement used to treat and prevent iron deficiency.	Still under consideration
Ferrous Sulphate oral liq 30 mg (6 mg elemental) per ml		Brand change
Fluoxetine hydrochloride cap 20 mg	used to treat various mental health conditions like major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bulimia nervosa, panic disorder, and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).	No brand change
Fulvestrant inj 50 mg per ml, 5 ml	A chemotherapy medicine used to treat certain types of breast cancer.	Still under consideration
Furosemide [Frusemide] inj 10 mg per ml, 2 ml	used to treat fluid retention and high blood pressure.	Still under consideration
Glycopyrronium bromide inj 0.2 mg per ml, 1 ml	used to reduce secretions like saliva and mucus.	Brand change
Heparin Sodium inj 5,000 iu per ml, 5 ml	an anticoagulant medicine used to prevent and treat blood clots.	Brand change
Levonorgestrel tab 1.5 mg	a hormonal medicine used for emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.	Brand change
Lidocaine [lignocaine] hydrochloride oral [gel] 2%	a local anaesthetic and antiarrhythmic drug. It's used to numb specific areas of the body during minor surgical procedures, dental work, or other medical procedures.	Brand change
Losartan with hydrochlorothiazide tab 50 mg with hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg	used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension).	Brand change
Methadone hydrochloride tab 5 mg	used for the relief of moderate to severe pain, for example pain caused by a terminal illness such as cancer.	Still under consideration
Methenamine (hexamine) Hippurate tab 1 g	used to prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs).	Still under consideration
Metoclopramide hydrochloride inj 5 mg per ml, 2 ml	used to help with certain stomach and digestive issues.	Brand change

Mitomycin C inj 5 mg vial	a chemotherapy medicine used to treat cancers such as upper gastrointestinal cancers (like esophageal cancer), anal cancer, breast cancer and superficial bladder tumours	Still under consideration
Mitomycin C inj 20 mg vial		Still under consideration
Noradrenaline inj 1 mg per ml, 4 ml ampoule	used in emergency situations to increase and maintain blood pressure in patients with severe low blood pressure (hypotension).	Brand change
Paracetamol oral liq 120 mg per 5 ml	used to treat mild to moderate pain, such as headaches, toothaches, muscle aches, and to reduce fever.	Still under consideration
Paracetamol oral liq 250 mg per 5 ml		Still under consideration
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (penicillin V) grans for oral liq 125 mg per 5 ml	an antibiotic used to treat various bacterial infections.	No brand change
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (penicillin V) grans for oral liq 250 mg per 5 ml		No brand change
Pirfenidone tab 267 mg	used to treat idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a condition in which the lungs become scarred and stiff, making it hard to breathe.	Still under consideration
Pirfenidone tab 801 mg		Still under consideration
Rocuronium bromide inj 10 mg per ml, 5 ml	used as a muscle relaxant during surgery and other medical procedures.	Brand change
Sertraline tab 50 mg	for various mental health conditions like major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder (SAD), and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).	Still under consideration

Sertraline tab 100 mg		Still under consideration
Sodium chloride inj 0.9%, 3 ml, prefilled syringe	used to flush intravenous lines to prevent blockages and reduce the risk of infection.	Still under consideration
Sodium chloride, 5 ml, prefilled syringe		Still under consideration
Sodium chloride, 10 ml, prefilled syringe		Still under consideration
Testosterone undecanoate inj 250 mg per ml	Long-acting form of testosterone that helps increase testosterone levels in the body.	Still under consideration
Varenicline tab 0.5 mg x 11 and 1 mg x 42	helps adults stop smoking.	Still under consideration
Varenicline tab 1 mg		Still under consideration
Water for injection purified for inj, 20 ml	Used to dissolve or dilute medicines which may then be injected. It can also be used for washing and cleaning purposes during minor surgical procedures, and to clean wounds.	Still under consideration
Water for injection purified for inj, 500 ml bag		Still under consideration

You can see the full technical details of the tender decisions in the Tender Results section [\[link\]](#).

How your feedback helped

The feedback received was considered as part of the decision-making process. It has also informed how Pharmac will support people through the upcoming brand changes. We want to thank everyone who took the time to share their feedback. We heard from a range of people including healthcare professionals, advocacy groups and users of medicines. You provided feedback about:

- packaging and labelling considerations
- the resources and communications needed to support a brand change
- the people who may need additional support when undergoing a brand change

Your feedback has helped to inform our implementation plans to support any brand changes.

Summary of feedback received [[link](#)]

Who may be most interested

- People who use funded medicines
- Healthcare professionals
- Advocacy groups
- Suppliers

24 March 2026

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Tender results

Pharmac has resolved to award tenders for Principal Supply Status for some medicines included in the 2024/25 Invitation to Tender dated 31 October 2024.

For decisions that will result in brand changes, some of the Pharmaceuticals that will be delisted when the period of Principal Supply Status commences may be subject to existing listing contracts with Pharmac. Suppliers of Pharmaceuticals that are subject to such contracts should continue to supply their Pharmaceutical under those contracts. Pharmac will continue to subsidise those Pharmaceuticals accordingly until such time as those Pharmaceuticals are delisted.

Notification of Product Changes (NOPC) forms

Please note that for any changes (price change, pack size change, new listing etc) to be effective in the Pharmaceutical Schedule (including Section H), suppliers are required to submit a Notification of Product Changes (NOPC) form to Pharmac, the Pharmacy Guild and the NZULM by:

- **For new listings**, by 4 pm on the 12th of August 2025 or the 5th of the month prior to listing, whichever is earlier
- **For price changes**, by 4 pm on the 12th of the month prior to the date of subsidy change

Pharmac cannot list a product (and Pharmacies cannot claim) without this information. More information about this process, and a copy of the NOPC form can be found on our website – <https://pharmac.govt.nz/medicine-funding-and-supply/make-an-application/pharmconnect-make-a-medicine-funding-application/process-for-notification-of-product-changes/>

Suppliers are required to ensure that a Pharmacode has been obtained from the Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (<http://www.pgnz.org.nz/about-us-1/Pharmacode>) and that a CTPP code has been obtained from the New Zealand Universal List of Medicines (<http://www.nzulm.org.nz/sponsors>). Pharmacodes and CTPP codes must be provided to Pharmac by the 5th of the month prior to the date of listing, or 10 business days following the market notification date (whichever is earliest). Pharmac cannot list a product (and Pharmacies cannot claim) without the correct Pharmacode.

2024/25 Tender – Principal Supply Status applies until 30 June 2028

Community Pharmaceutical tenders – Section B of the Pharmaceutical Schedule

The decisions were as follows:

1. *Tenders awarded to currently listed pharmaceuticals where no other brand is listed (no brand change).*

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date
Fluoxetine hydrochloride	Cap 20 mg; 90 capsule blister pack	\$3.13	\$3.50	Arrow – Fluoxetine (Teva)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V)	Grans for oral liq 125 mg per 5 ml; 100 ml bottle	\$3.40	\$5.75	AFT (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V)	Grans for oral liq 250 mg per 5 ml; 100 ml bottle	\$4.24	\$5.89	AFT (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026

2. *Tenders awarded to pharmaceuticals where at least one other brand is listed (the funded brand will change).*

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date	Brand (Supplier) affected by delisting
Amoxicillin	Cap 500 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$41.00 (per 500)	\$1.14 (per 20)	Amoxycillin Sandoz (Sandoz)	1 April 2026	1 September 2026	Miro-Amoxicillin (Miro)
Bisacodyl	Tab 5 mg; 200 tablet blister pack	\$5.80	\$6.28	Lax-Tab (AFT)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Bisacodyl Viatris (Viatris)
Cefalexin	Cap 250 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$3.85	\$3.90	Cefalexin Lupin (Lupin)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026 1 July 2026	Cephalexin ABM (Boucher)
Cefalexin	Cap 500 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$5.85	\$3.33	Cefalexin Sandoz (Sandoz)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026 1 July 2026	Cephalexin ABM (Boucher)
Celecoxib	Cap 200 mg; 30 capsule blister pack	\$3.20	\$2.55	Celostea (Viatris)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Celecoxib Pfizer (Aspen) Celebrex (Aspen)
Chloramphenicol	Eye drops 0.5%; 10 ml dropper bottle pack	\$1.45	\$1.84	Chlorafast (Teva)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026	Chlorsig (Aspen)
Clindamycin	Inj 150 mg per ml, 4 ml ampoule; 10 ampoule pack	\$35.10	\$48.78	Dalacin C (Pfizer)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026	HamelN (Max Health)
Compound electrolytes with glucose [Dextrose]	Soln with electrolytes; 1 L bottle pack	\$6.53	\$8.45	Pedialyte (Abbott)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Hydralyte - Lemonade (Care Pharmaceuticals)
Docusate sodium with sennosides	Tab 50 mg with sennosides 8 mg; 100 tablet bottle pack	\$3.50 (per 200)	\$1.50 (per 100)	Solax (Adira Medica)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026	Laxsol (Aspen)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 5 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$1.75	\$1.40	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 10 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$1.97	\$1.58	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 20 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$2.35	\$2.00	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date	Brand (Supplier) affected by delisting
Ferrous sulfate	Oral liq 30 mg (6 mg elemental) per 1 ml; 250 ml bottle pack	\$13.10 (per 500 ml) Ferodan (Viatriis)	\$10.25 (per 250 ml)	Ferro-Liquid (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026	Ferodan (Viatriis)
		\$9.25 (per 250 ml) Ferro- Liquid (AFT)					
Glycopyrronium bromide	Inj 200 mcg per m, 1 ml ampoule; 10 glass ampoule pack	\$19.00 (per 5)	\$11.99 (per 10)	Glycopyrronium-AFT (AFT)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Robinul (Aspen)
Heparin sodium	Inj 5,000 iu per ml, 5 ml; 50 plastic ampoule pack	\$83.00 (per 10)	\$406.15 (per 50)	Heparin Sodium Pfizer (Pfizer)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026	Heparin Sodium Panpharma (Multichem)
Levonorgestrel	Tab 1.5 mg; 1 tablet blister pack	\$1.75	\$1.31	Levonorgestrel-1 GH (Lupin)	1 January 2026	1 June 2026	Levonorgestrel BNM (Boucher)
Lidocaine [Lignocaine] hydrochloride	Oral (gel) soln 2%; 200 ml bottle	\$44.00	\$30.80	Xylocaine Viscous (Aspen)	1 November 2025	1 April 2026	Mucosoothe (Orion Laboratories)
Losartan potassium with hydrochlorothiazide	Tab 50 mg with hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$4.00 (per 30)	\$7.25 (per 90)	l-Losartan & Hydrochlorothiazide (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Arrow-Losartan & Hydrochlorothiazide (Teva)
Metoclopramide hydrochloride	Inj 5 mg per ml, 2 ml ampoule; 10 glass ampoule box	\$7.00	\$5.48	Medsurge (Medsurge)	1 November 2025	1 April 2026	Baxter (Baxter)

¹This product will be supplied at the Price from the 1st day of the month prior to the listing date, as per Schedule 4 clause 2.3(c)(ii) of the 2024/25 Invitation to Tender.

Hospital Pharmaceutical tenders – Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule

The decisions were as follows:

3. Tenders awarded to currently listed pharmaceuticals where no other brand is listed (no brand change).

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date
Fluoxetine hydrochloride	Cap 20 mg; 90 capsule blister pack	\$3.13	\$3.50	Arrow – Fluoxetine (Teva)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V)	Grans for oral liq 125 mg per 5 ml; 100 ml bottle	\$3.40	\$5.75	AFT (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026
Phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V)	Grans for oral liq 250 mg per 5 ml; 100 ml bottle	\$4.24	\$5.89	AFT (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026

4. Tenders awarded to pharmaceuticals where at least one other brand is listed (the funded brand will change).

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date	Brand (Supplier) affected by delisting
Amoxicillin	Cap 500 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$41.00 (per 500)	\$1.14 (per 20)	Amoxycillin Sandoz (Sandoz)	1 April 2026	1 September 2026	Miro-Amoxicillin (Miro)
Bisacodyl	Tab 5 mg; 200 tablet blister pack	\$5.80	\$6.28	Lax-Tab (AFT)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Bisacodyl Viatrix (Viatrix)
Cefalexin	Cap 250 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$3.85	\$3.90	Cefalexin Lupin (Lupin)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026 1 July 2026	Cephalexin ABM (Boucher)
Cefalexin	Cap 500 mg; 20 capsule blister pack	\$5.85	\$3.33	Cefalexin Sandoz (Sandoz)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026 1 July 2026	Cephalexin ABM (Boucher)

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date	Brand (Supplier) affected by delisting
Celecoxib	Cap 200 mg; 30 capsule blister pack	\$3.20	\$2.55	Celostea (Viatris)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Celecoxib Pfizer (Aspen)
Chloramphenicol	Eye drops 0.5%; 10 ml dropper bottle pack	\$1.45	\$1.84	Chlorafast (Teva)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026	Chlorsig (Aspen)
Clindamycin	Inj 150 mg per ml, 4 ml ampoule	\$35.10	\$48.78	Dalacin C (Pfizer)	1 October 2025	1 March 2026	Hamelin (Max Health)
Compound electrolytes with glucose [Dextrose]	Soln with electrolytes; 1 ml bottle pack	\$6.53	\$8.45	Pedialte (Abbott)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Hydralyte - Lemonade (Care Pharmaceuticals)
Docusate sodium with sennosides	Tab 50 mg with sennosides 8 mg; 100 tablet bottle pack	\$3.50 (per 200)	\$1.50 (per 100)	Solax (Adira Medica)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026	Laxsol (Aspen)
Droperidol	Inj 2.5 mg per ml, 1 ml ampoule; 10 ampoule pack	\$43.85	\$28.68	Droperidol Medsurge (Medsurge)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026	Droperidol Panpharma (Multichem)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 5 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$1.75	\$1.40	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 10 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$1.97	\$1.58	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)
Enalapril maleate	Tab 20 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$2.35	\$2.00	Ipca-Enalapril (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Acetec (Viatris)
Ferrous sulfate	Oral liq 30 mg (6 mg elemental) per 1 ml; 250 ml bottle pack	\$13.10 (per 500 ml) Ferodan (Viatris)	\$10.25 (per 250 ml)	Ferro-Liquid (AFT)	1 September 2025	1 February 2026	Ferodan (Viatris)
		\$9.25 (per 250 ml) Ferro-Liquid (AFT)					

Chemical name	Presentation; Pack size and type	Current pack price	New pack price	Principal Supply brand (Supplier)	Date of subsidy change	Principal Supply date	Brand (Supplier) affected by delisting
Glycopyrronium bromide	Inj 200 mcg per m, 1 ml ampoule; 10 glass ampoule pack	\$19.00 (per 5)	\$11.99 (per 10)	Glycopyrronium-AFT (AFT)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Robinul (Aspen)
Heparin sodium	Inj 5,000 iu per ml, 5 ml; 50 plastic ampoule pack	\$83.00 (per 10)	\$406.15 (per 50)	Heparin Sodium Pfizer (Pfizer)	1 December 2025	1 May 2026	Heparin Sodium Panpharma (Multichem)
Levonorgestrel	Tab 1.5 mg; 1 tablet blister pack	\$1.75	\$1.31	Levonorgestrel-1 GH (Lupin)	1 January 2026	1 June 2026	Levonorgestrel BNM (Boucher)
Lidocaine [Lignocaine] hydrochloride	Oral (gel) soln 2%; 200 ml bottle	\$44.00	\$30.80	Xylocaine Viscous (Aspen)	1 November 2025	1 April 2026	Mucosoothe (Orion Laboratories)
Losartan potassium with hydrochlorothiazide	Tab 50 mg with hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg; 90 tablet blister pack	\$4.00 (per 30)	\$7.25 (per 90)	I-Losartan & Hydrochlorothiazide (Miro)	1 February 2026	1 July 2026	Arrow-Losartan & Hydrochlorothiazide (Teva)
Metoclopramide hydrochloride	Inj 5 mg per ml, 2 ml ampoule; 10 glass ampoule box	\$7.00	\$5.48	Medsurge (Medsurge)	1 November 2025	1 April 2026	Baxter (Baxter)
Noradrenaline	Inj 1 mg per ml, 4 ml ampoule; 10 glass ampoule box	\$45.00	\$32.78	Noradrenaline Medsurge (Medsurge)	1 October 2025	1 May 2026	Noradrenaline BNM (Boucher)
Rocuronium bromide	Inj 10 mg per ml, 5 ml vial; 10 vial box	\$37.06	\$28.96	Medsurge (Medsurge)	1 October 2025	1 May 2026	Hameln (Max Health)
¹ This product will be supplied at the Price from the 1 st day of the month prior to the listing date, as per Schedule 4 clause 2.3(c)(ii) of the 2024/25 Invitation to Tender.							

For products included in the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 Invitation to Tender where no announcement has yet been made, a decision is still pending subject to Pharmac Board (or its delegate) approval. We will keep you informed of any updates regarding such tender products as decisions are made.

If you have any queries regarding this notification, please contact Pharmac on 0800 66 00 50.

What you told us

Theme	Pharmac Comment
Packaging and labelling clarity	
<p>Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of packaging and labelling in ensuring safe and effective medicine use. Key themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and legible labelling to prevent medication errors. • Avoidance of look-alike packaging and vials, which can lead to confusion and incorrect administration. • Preference for plastic ampoules over glass, due to injury risks from shattered glass. • Preference for glass ampoules over plastic as glass can provide better protection against some chemicals. • Consistency in size and shape of ampoules and vials, especially for storage in custom-designed modules (e.g., ambulance services). • Use of visual aids and images to help patients and healthcare professionals recognize new brands. • Tall man lettering and plain fonts to improve readability and reduce errors. • Environmental sustainability in packaging design, balancing safety with ecological impact. 	<p>Thank you for highlighting the importance of packaging and labelling in ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines.</p> <p>These factors are all considered by our Tender Clinical Advisory Committee (TCAC) when evaluating whether the proposed brands of medicines are suitable to be awarded Principal Supply Status (PSS). TCAC is made up of a range of healthcare professionals including pharmacists, nurses and doctors who have hands-on experience with medicines and understand the practical implications of different product characteristics.</p> <p>TCAC reviewed all of the proposed brands and considered all of them to be suitable to be the main funded brand of medicine in New Zealand.</p> <p>However, your feedback emphasised and reinforced how important these factors are, and this has been considered as part of our decision-making considerations.</p>
Educational resources	
<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of educational resources to support safe and effective transitions during brand changes. The most frequently mentioned formats and tools included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational activities (e.g., workshops, webinars, training sessions) • Website updates with clear, accessible information 	<p>We appreciate the wide range of suggestions that were provided.</p> <p>We acknowledge that providing a range of informative resources is important to support the healthcare professionals prescribing, administering, and dispensing the medicines, and the users of the medicines themselves.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of clearly communicating the key differences between old and new brands using a range of different formats.</p> <p>We will use your feedback to inform the development of our implementation plans to support brand changes.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email updates to consumer advocacy groups and healthcare professionals • Comparison charts to visually show differences between old and new brands • Healthify consumer fact sheets tailored for public understanding • Prescriber alerts to notify clinicians of changes and implications 	
Communication and advance notice	
<p>Respondents consistently emphasised that timely, clear, and multi-channel communication is essential for successful brand changes. Key themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance notice: A minimum of six months was suggested to allow for inventory planning, patient education, and system updates. • Multi-channel communication: Preferred methods included email updates, website announcements, prescriber alerts, and direct outreach to consumer advocacy groups. • Consistency and clarity: Communications should be simple, reassuring, and clearly explain the reason for the change, the equivalence of the new brand, and what patients should expect. • Support for healthcare professionals: Prescribers and pharmacists need early alerts and practical tools to guide patients through the change and manage any concerns. • Tailored messaging: Communications should be adapted for vulnerable populations, including neurodiverse individuals, older adults, and those with limited digital access. 	<p>We acknowledge that clear, consistent, multi-channel communications are needed to effectively support brand changes.</p> <p>We also acknowledge the need to engage directly with key stakeholders - including consumer advocacy groups and healthcare professionals to support any brand changes.</p> <p>We understand that clear communication may reduce some of the anxiety associated with a brand change. Targeted and tailored communications highlighting the differences between brands would be included as part of any implementation plans to support a brand change.</p> <p>We will work to give the sector as much notice as possible to ensure a smooth transition.</p>
Formulation and excipient concerns	
<p>Respondents raised several important issues regarding how differences in formulation and excipients can affect medicine safety, tolerability, and efficacy:</p>	<p>All generic medicines must go through the Medsafe approval process before they can be supplied in New Zealand.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability in absorption and bioavailability: Especially critical for medicines with a narrow therapeutic index • Excipient sensitivity: Concerns about preservatives, sweeteners, dyes, lactose, gluten, and alcohols (e.g., propylene glycol, ethanol) affecting tolerability-particularly in paediatric, elderly, or neurodiverse populations. • Formulation suitability: Requests for crushable tablets, preservative-free injectables, and formulations that support tapering (e.g., smaller doses or soluble forms). • Impact on vulnerable groups: Neurodiverse individuals, people with cognitive decline, and those with chronic or critical conditions may be more sensitive to even minor formulation changes. 	<p>Medsafe assesses whether generic medicines are bioequivalent to or gets into the body the same way as the original or innovator brand. All of the brands included in this notification have been approved by Medsafe.</p> <p>The Alternative Brand Allowance would allow patients to apply for funded access to a different brand if their prescriber considers the funded brand would be clinically unsuitable for their needs.</p>
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Supply continuity

<p>Respondents emphasized that maintaining a reliable supply of medicines is critical to patient safety, treatment adherence, and healthcare system efficiency. Key concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of supply disruptions: Disruptions can delay treatment, compromise therapeutic outcomes, and increase the burden on healthcare providers who must adjust prescriptions and counsel patients. • Need for vertically integrated suppliers: Suppliers with control over active pharmaceutical ingredients (API), manufacturing, and packaging were seen as more reliable and better able to respond to demand fluctuations. • Importance of local or regional supply: Feedback highlighted the value of having stock readily available in Australia to reduce lead times and improve responsiveness to changes in demand. • Planning and transparency: Suppliers requested clearer timelines and communication from Pharmac to support inventory 	<p>Pharmac's agreements with suppliers help New Zealand mitigate the impact of medicine and medical device supply issues, many of which are experienced globally. These agreements require suppliers to hold a certain amount of stock in New Zealand and maintain ongoing supply. Pharmac also stays in regular contact with suppliers, sharing information about expected supply and demand to help prevent problems.</p> <p>When a supply issue is identified, Pharmac's contract management team works with suppliers and other sector partners to respond quickly and manage the situation. While these arrangements don't always prevent shortages, we acknowledge the impact they can have on healthcare professionals and the community. The Pharmac model supports continuity of supply and helps ensure New Zealanders can access the treatments they need.</p> <p>A supplier's supply chain is also considered when we review whether a brand change may be appropriate. We take into account how a supplier may reduce the risk of a supply shortage happening including whether they have a vertically integrated supply chain and whether they are able to access stock from other markets including Australia.</p>
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<p>planning and avoid gaps in availability.</p>	<p>We are committed to improving how we can engage with suppliers and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>Environmental sustainability</p>	
<p>Respondents acknowledged the environmental impact of health care and encouraged Pharmac to consider sustainability in procurement decisions-provided it does not compromise patient safety. Key themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable packaging: There was a call to consider environmentally friendly packaging materials, such as recyclable containers or reduced plastic use, where clinically appropriate. • Balancing safety and sustainability: While plastic ampoules were preferred over glass for safety reasons (to prevent injuries), respondents also emphasized the need to weigh this against environmental costs. • Minimising waste: Suggestions included supplying medicines in concentrations that reduce the need for dilution, which can help minimize packaging waste and reduce the use of consumables. • Carbon footprint awareness: Several comments highlighted the substantial carbon footprint of healthcare and encouraged efforts to reduce it through procurement and packaging choices. 	<p>Pharmac evaluates tender bids against the Factors for Consideration – our decision making framework. Sustainability considerations are not a formal evaluation criterion under the Factors for Consideration.</p> <p>However while sustainability considerations are not a formal evaluation criterion under the Factors for Consideration, as a Crown Entity, Pharmac is committed to supporting achieving Broader Outcomes through its procurement processes. This includes considering environmental sustainability benefits where possible.</p> <p>We are interested in learning from potential suppliers any sustainability innovations or initiatives they are undertaking.</p>
<p>Patient adherence and confusion</p>	
<p>Respondents highlighted that brand changes can lead to confusion and disrupt established routines, which in turn may affect adherence to treatment. Key concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual changes in medicine appearance: Alterations in pill colour, shape, or packaging-especially when not communicated clearly can cause confusion and lead to missed doses or incorrect usage. • Routine disruption: Patients, particularly those managing multiple medications or with cognitive impairments, may 	<p>Thank you for highlighting the potential risks associated with brand changes. We acknowledge that brand changes can be disruptive to patients and that clear and effective communication is required to minimise the impact on users of medicines.</p> <p>We understand that clear communication and a range of informative resources in a variety of formats may reduce some of the anxiety associated with a brand change. Targeted and tailored communications highlighting the differences between brands would be included as part of any implementation plans to support a brand change.</p>

<p>struggle to adapt to changes in medicine appearance or instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nocebo effects: Some patients may perceive a new brand as less effective or experience side effects due to anxiety or mistrust, even when the formulation is equivalent. Respondents highlighted there was a higher risk of the nocebo effect with medicines used for mental health. • Need for advance communication: Providing images and comparison charts of new brands ahead of time was suggested to help patients recognize and trust the new product. • Health care professional support: Clear guidance and communication tools are needed to help prescribers and pharmacists reassure patients and manage transitions effectively. 	
Tender process transparency	
<p>Respondents expressed a strong desire for greater clarity, predictability, and fairness in how Pharmac manages the annual tender process. Key concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of advance notice: Suppliers noted that significant changes to the tender process-such as the addition of a consultation step-were communicated retrospectively, making it difficult to plan and respond effectively. • Uncertainty in decision-making: Some suppliers reported investing in product registration and tender submissions only to find that products were not awarded, with no clear explanation of the criteria used. • Impact on supply planning: Delays in tender decisions were said to affect inventory management, especially for high-volume products with long lead times. • Need for procedural transparency: There were calls for Pharmac to disclose the factors that determine product suitability 	<p>Thank you for your feedback about the annual tender process. We acknowledge that the additional consultation step resulted in different timelines and milestones for the 2024/25 tender compared to previous years.</p> <p>We understand this may have had downstream effects on suppliers and other health system stakeholders.</p> <p>The additional consultation step was introduced as part of our broader commitment to improving engagement with the community. It will be incorporated into future tenders.</p> <p>We intend to run a supplier briefing session in August. This will take place while the Draft 2025/26 Invitation to Tender is open for consultation. More details about this briefing will be published on our website, on the Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS) and emailed via our mailing lists. You can subscribe to receiving email updates on our website.</p> <p>As a Crown Entity, Pharmac is also required to follow the New Zealand Government Procurement Rules in its procurement processes.</p>

<p>before tenders are issued, and to provide updates through meetings or briefings.</p>	
Vulnerable populations	
<p>Respondents emphasized that certain groups may face greater risks or challenges during brand changes due to physical, cognitive, or psychological vulnerabilities. Key concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive and memory issues: Older adults, especially those with dementia or cognitive decline, may become confused or distressed by changes in medicine appearance, packaging, or instructions. • Sensory sensitivities: Neurodiverse individuals may react negatively to changes in taste, texture, smell, or colour, which can affect adherence and wellbeing. • Paediatric safety: Preterm infants and young children are more sensitive to excipients like benzyl alcohol, propylene glycol, and artificial sweeteners or dyes. • Mental health stability: Patients with chronic psychiatric conditions may experience destabilisation or nocebo effects when switched from a familiar brand, even if the formulation is equivalent. 	<p>Thank you for identifying the groups who may find it more difficult to change brands of their medicines. We acknowledge that these groups would require additional support when undergoing a brand change</p> <p>We understand that clear communication and informative resources would be required to support vulnerable populations who may find it more difficult to undergo a brand change of their medicine.</p> <p>Targeted and tailored communications highlighting the differences between brands would be included as part of any implementation plans to support a brand change.</p>

If you have any questions about this decision, you can email us at enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz; or call our toll free number (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday) on 0800 660 050.