

## Paracetamol oral liquid: Brand and Strength changes

There are potential safety issues when prescribing liquid paracetamol due to changes in the supply over the next few months. This is due to the current supplier of Paracetamol (Paracare™) exiting the Aotearoa New Zealand market.

### Short term supply has a new high strength: from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Due to increased global demand, Pharmac was unable to source a 250 mg per 5 ml replacement product. To ensure there is an ongoing supply of liquid paracetamol until new contracted brands are in place Pharmac has *temporarily* listed the Avallon™ brand [Pharmac 2022]:

- Paracetamol **120 mg per 5 ml** (200 ml) – Avallon™ (Pharmacode 2643138)
- Paracetamol **240 mg per 5 ml** (200 ml) – Avallon™ (Pharmacode 2643693) – Please note new strength

During the transition period, there will be a mixture of 240mg per 5ml and 250mg per 5ml paracetamol liquids in the community. Encourage all users to talk to their dispensing pharmacy about the brand they receive to ensure the appropriate dose chart is used, especially if the patient already has stock at home. This is a timely reminder that paracetamol is the most common medication involved in childhood poisoning in Aotearoa NZ.

Both strengths of the Avallon™ brand have been listed with the designation 'OP', allowing the quantity dispensed to be rounded up to the smallest number of 200ml containers sufficient to provide the amount prescribed.

Key differences of Avallon™:

- Both strengths are **strawberry-vanilla** flavour (previously 120mg per 5ml strawberry and 250 mg per 5ml orange)
- Colour is **off-white** for **both strengths** (previously pink and orange respectively)
- A smaller pack size: 200 ml glass bottles with a child-resistant cap

#### Key prescribing points for paracetamol liquid:

- **Calculate the appropriate dose** using **current** body weight (children and adults)
- Include the patient's **body weight on the prescription**; to allow pharmacy to check the correct dose when dispensing
- Counsel patients that they may receive a **new flavour, colour and strength and that they should check with the pharmacy**
  - Patients/parents/caregivers should **NOT rely on the colour, smell or flavour for dosing**
  - Remind patients/parents/caregivers that ibuprofen 100mg per 5ml is also off-white in colour and comes in 200ml bottles and to be careful not to mix these up
  - Remind patients/parents/caregivers to always read the label and give the right dose using an oral dose syringe or graduated medicine measure
  - An online dose calculator for the three strengths is available here: [Paracetamol dose calculator | Health Navigator NZ](#)

An information sheet to print out and give with dispensings can be found using the link below. Please note the colour of the bottle labels on the Avallon™ brand are reversed compared to Paracare™ ie 120mg per 5ml has a blue label and the 240mg per 5ml has a red label [paracetamol-liquid-english-factsheetpdf.pdf \(healthnavigator.org.nz\)](#)

The Avallon™ 120mg per 5ml product has provisional Medsafe approval; it will show in the Schedule as section 29 until the Schedule is updated for October. The 240mg per 5ml product has not had Medsafe approval so prescribe and dispense as a section 29 medicine.

### Longer term supply

A long-term supply of liquid paracetamol has been sourced, so another brand change is coming up later in the year or early next year. The new preparations will be the same strength and flavour as the original Paracare™ brand, but colour-free, and in 200ml bottles.

- From 1 November 2022 funded brand of paracetamol 250 mg per 5 ml oral liquid will be Pamol™ (orange flavour)
- From 1 January 2023 funded brand of paracetamol 120 mg per 5 ml oral liquid will be Paracetamol (Ethics™) (strawberry flavour)

#### Reference

- Pharmac. Paracetamol oral liquid: Brand change. 2022 [06.09.2022]; Available from: <https://pharmac.govt.nz/medicine-funding-and-supply/medicine-notice/paracetamol-liquid/?updatedWithin=7days>

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