

Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets – corresponding guidance on endorsement, prescription charges, remuneration and reimbursement plus Q&A.

SSP for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets

1) Endorsement

The contractor must endorse the prescription form, EPS token or Electronic Reimbursement Endorsement Message (EREM) as per Clause 9, Part II of the Drug Tariff.

Electronic prescription:

Where SSP endorsement functionality is available on the dispensing system the contractor must select SSP and input the three-digit reference number.

Example	Endorsement
	Option
<p>Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor selects in system pack of atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30</p>	SSP013

Where SSP endorsement functionality is not available on the dispensing system but the contractor is able to use the NCSO functionality for SSPs then endorse NCSO.

Example	Endorsement
	Option
<p>Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30</p>	NCSO

If SSP and NCSO endorsement functionality is unavailable on the dispensing system indicate on the EREM either “ND” or “Not dispensed” and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS token as detailed for a non-electronic prescription form.

Non-electronic prescription form:

Example	Endorsement
	Option
Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30	SSP013
Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30	

2) Prescription charges

Pharmacy contractors must take one prescription levy. Only one prescription charge will be applicable for patients who are not exempt from prescription charges.

3) Remuneration

Supply in accordance with the SSP will result in the following fees being paid to the contractor:

- One Single Activity Fee (£1.29)
- One SSP fee (£5.35)

4) Reimbursement

The supplied product in accordance with this SSP will be reimbursed as if it was dispensed against a prescription, i.e. in this instance contractors will be reimbursed the Part VIII A reimbursement price for the atorvastatin 20mg tablets. The reimbursement price will account for VAT payment.

Q&A

Will the SSPs apply to cross-border prescriptions?

Yes. Patients from Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland who present their prescriptions for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets in England are eligible to receive an alternative supply under the terms of the SSP (only where pharmacists consider it appropriate to do so using their professional judgement).

Does the SSPs apply to private prescriptions?

Yes. The scope of an SSP applies to valid prescriptions that meets the requirements of the Human Medicine Regulations (2012), so it would cover both NHS and private prescriptions, unless where it stated otherwise on the SSP itself.

Will prescription charges apply under an SSP?

Yes, patients who are not exempt from prescription charges would continue to pay this for as usual. The only circumstance in which patients would not have to pay for a prescription charge is where an SSP recommends a lower quantity to be supplied. Please note that the SSP for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets does not recommend a lower quantity to be supplied, so patients will continue to pay prescription charges (unless they are already exempt). For more information please see the above guidance.

Can pharmacists use their professional judgement to supply an alternative atorvastatin product to patients that is not listed in the SSP e.g. dispersible tablets/ unlicensed/ special products?

Pharmacists are not able to deviate from the recommendations on what to supply to patients as outlined in the SSP for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets. However, if pharmacists think that an alternative product not listed in the SSP would be suitable for the patient, they should either contact the prescriber to discuss this (with the patient's consent) or direct the patient back to the prescriber.