

# HERTFORDSHIRE AND WEST ESSEX AREA PRESCRIBING COMMITTEE (HWE APC)

## XAQUA®

### METOLAZONE FORMULARY PRODUCT OF CHOICE

**RED - RECOMMENDED FOR RESTRICTED PRESCRIBING BY SPECIALIST ONLY.**

**NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PRIMARY CARE PRESCRIBING.**

Name: generic (trade)	What it is	Indication	Date decision last revised	Decision status	NICE / SMC Guidance
Metolazone (Xaqua®)	Thiazide-like diuretic	Oedema in congestive heart failure Oedema in renal disease Hypertension	June 2023	Final	NA

#### HWE APC recommendation:

**Xaqua® is metolazone formulary product of choice. To be prescribed by brand name.**

**RED status – not recommended for prescribing by primary care. Prescribing responsibility to be retained by secondary care/specialists).**

[MHRA drug safety alert](#) (January 2023) highlights the different bioavailability and dosing instructions between Xaqua® and unlicensed imported metolazone preparations and notes some recommendations for health care providers on safe prescribing for new patients and safe switching for existing patients.

#### Further information:

HWE APC have agreed the following actions across HWE ICS to mitigate the risks identified on product differences and product choice as well as switching between products:

- Xaqua® is the formulary drug of choice** across HWE ICS. To be **prescribed by brand** to rationalise product choice and support product specific prescribing and supply.
- New patients:** Xaqua® to be used for new patients (RED status – not recommended for prescribing by primary care. Prescribing responsibility to be retained by secondary care/specialists).
- Existing patients** on unlicensed metolazone that require ongoing treatment, require review by their specialist to switch to licensed Xaqua® at their next review/next supply.  
**Until such review takes place, prescriptions should not be amended to Xaqua®.**
- Information for prescribers when switching patients from unlicensed metolazone to Xaqua®

**Prescribers should consider individual patient factors to consider appropriate dose. Specialists to monitor patients to assess the clinical impact of the switch.**

Prescribed dose of unlicensed metolazone	*Suggested dose of Xaqua® (licensed metolazone) <b>Note: 5mg tablets can be halved</b>
5mg in the morning	2.5mg in the morning
2.5mg in the morning	2.5mg alternate morning
2.5mg alternate morning	2.5mg twice a week
2.5mg in the morning three times a week	2.5mg twice a week
2.5mg in the morning twice a week	2.5mg in the morning once a week

Adopted from Guide to unlicensed metolazone and Xaqua® dosing equivalence', Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire ICS guidance

**\*Suggested switching table to be used as a guide only.**

***Switching patients will require individual assessment, monitoring frequency and follow up as to the proposed dosing with Xaqua®. A dose adjustment may be necessary and individualised titration based on patient's response and tolerability is advised if switching to Xaqua® tablets.***

*(The SPC for Xaqua® states there is up to a two-fold difference in bioavailability compared to another brand of metolazone (Metenix®). No comparative bioavailability studies have been conducted with the unlicensed (imported) preparations known to be predominantly used in the UK.)*

5. Prescribers to provide clear information to patients and patient information leaflet ([PIL](#)) supporting patient education on brand selection, the switch, dosing information and to advise patients on signs and symptoms of electrolyte imbalance or if dose is too low and to contact a healthcare professional. PIL to be provided to patients to reinforce information provided at point of prescribing/switch.
6. Clinical information re metolazone prescribing to be included in the clinic letter to include brand, dose and frequency and arrangements for monitoring and follow up. Patients are to be counselled by specialists at initiation and switch and PIL to be provided to the patient.
7. Dispensers to check correct brand and dose with patient. Clear labelling instructions (e.g. brand, strength, dose e.g. half a tablet; times a week) should be provided.

**References:**

1. Xaqua (metolazone) 5mg tablets: exercise caution when switching patients between metolazone preparations, drug safety update January 2023 ([MHRA drug safety alert](#))
2. Metolazone preparation differences and safety considerations (April 2023), Specialist pharmacy service accessed via <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/metolazone-preparation-differences-and-safety-considerations/>