

# Medicines

## Optimisation news headlines

October - November 2019

### Melatonin - summary of preparations and local recommendations

A wide variety of melatonin preparations is available, either as licensed medicines for supply on prescription, prescription 'specials' or food supplements that can be purchased. There are currently only three licensed products available in the UK

Brand	Formulation(s)	Licensed Indications	Off-license use
Circadin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2mg prolonged-release tablets</li> </ul>	<p>Insomnia in adults aged 55 years or over.</p> <p>Take 1 to 2 hours before bed and after food.</p>	Retains prolonged-release properties when halved. Becomes immediate-release if crushed.
Slenyto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1mg and 5mg prolonged-release tablets</li> </ul>	<p>Insomnia in children and adolescents aged 2-18 with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and / or Smith-Magenis syndrome.</p> <p>Take 30 mins to 1 hour before bed and after food.</p>	Becomes immediate-release if crushed.
Melatonin (Colonis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3mg tablets</li> <li>• 1mg in 1ml oral solution</li> </ul>	<p>Jet lag in adults.</p> <p>Leave at least 2 hours before and after food.</p>	<b>Not</b> suitable for children and adolescents.

Under shared care guidance that is approved by the Basingstoke, Southampton and Winchester District Prescribing Committee, melatonin has been supported for use in the following situations where non-pharmacological strategies have been tried, but sleep latency remains a significant problem:

- Children and adolescents with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) or myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) who have sleep difficulties.
- Children of at least 1 year of age with neurodevelopment disability, autism, visual impairment or neuropsychiatric disorders and chronic sleep disturbance.

Prescribing of melatonin is not recommended for any other indication.

Consequently none of the available products are licensed for a large proportion of the accepted indications.

NICE has produced a summary of the evidence for unlicensed melatonin that suggests it may reduce the time taken to go to sleep by approximately 20 minutes when taken by children with sleep onset insomnia and ADHD for a period of 10 days to 4 weeks. In addition melatonin may improve average sleep duration by 15 to 20 minutes. Associated improvement in ADHD-related behaviour, cognition or quality of life was not robustly demonstrated.



The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) considered the use of Circadin and Slenyto for their licensed indications. Neither was recommended for use in Scotland as a case for cost-effectiveness was not proven. Similarly, Slenyto was not recommended for use in Wales when considered by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG).

The price of products that contain melatonin varies widely.

Preparation		Licensed dose	Cost for 30 days treatment	
			2mg at night	10mg at night
Circadin		2mg at bedtime	£15.39	£76.95
Slenyto		2mg to 10mg at bedtime	£41.20	£206.00
Melatonin (Colonis)	tablet	3mg to 6mg once a day (max 5 days)	£65.00 (3mg on)	£195.00 (9mg on)
	oral solution		£52.00	£260.00
<b>Specials with a Drug Tariff price</b>				
5mg in 5ml	oral suspension	(alcohol free)	£21.46	£31.46 (1x300ml) £64.38 (3x100ml)
5mg in 5ml	oral solution	(alcohol free)	£21.07	£25.07 (1x300ml) £61.21 (3x100ml)

Other strengths of oral solutions and suspensions are listed in the Drug Tariff specials but tend to carry a higher cost. Where a liquid preparation is essential it is preferable for the 5mg in 5ml strength to be prescribed for consistency.

The price of any other specials that do not appear in the Drug Tariff is variable and some products can be very expensive. This includes tablets, capsules and liquid preparations. Please note that Kidnap and Kidmel are unlicensed and treated as specials.

Under the current [shared care guideline](#), Circadin remains the first choice product.

### Semaglutide – Pens are multidose.

National data has shown there has been confusion about the number of doses in each pen and the quantity that need to be prescribed. Some patients may inadvertently be receiving one pen for each dose that is administered.

Pens are available in 3 strengths and each pen delivers FOUR doses:

- 0.25mg (250microgram) per dose
- 0.5mg (500microgram) per dose
- 1mg per dose

Your Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist or Technician will be able to help with any queries on this topic.

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