

Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream – corresponding guidance on endorsement, prescription charges, remuneration and reimbursement plus Q&A.

SSP 020 for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream

There are three live SSPs for this product:

- **SSP 020** – where the duration of treatment on the prescription exceeds 3 months and Ovestin® is in stock **this SSP applies**.
- SSP 024 – where the duration of treatment on the prescription is 3 months or less, Ovestin® is not in stock, and substitution is deemed clinically appropriate.
- SSP 025 – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription exceeds 3 months, Ovestin® is not in stock and substitution is deemed clinically appropriate.

1) Endorsement

The contractor must endorse the prescription form 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, leaving a space between SSP and the reference number, as shown below. The contractor must also select in the system the SSP item that has been supplied.

Example	Endorsement Option
<p>Prescription for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream x REDUCED QUANTITY IN LINE WITH SSP</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor selects in system Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream x REDUCED QUANTITY IN LINE WITH SSP</p>	<p>SSP 020</p>

Non-electronic prescription form:

Example	Endorsement
	Option
Prescription for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream Pharmacy contractor supplies Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream x REDUCED QUANTITY IN LINE WITH SSP	SSP 020 Pharmacy contractor endorses Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream x REDUCED QUANTITY IN LINE WITH SSP

2) Prescription charges

For supply in accordance with this SSP 020, no prescription charges will be applicable for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream.

In order to ensure prescription charges are reconciled correctly, pharmacy contractors must endorse the correct SSP number.

3) Remuneration

Supply in accordance with this SSP 020 will result in the following fees being paid to the contractor:

- One Single Activity Fee (£1.27)
- One SSP fee (£5.35)

4) Reimbursement

The supplied product in accordance with this SSP 020 will be reimbursed as if it was dispensed against a prescription. In this instance, contractors will be reimbursed the Part VIIIA reimbursement price for the quantity supplied for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream.

The reimbursement price will account for VAT payment.

Q&A

Will the SSP apply to cross-border prescriptions?

Yes. Patients from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland who present their prescriptions for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream are eligible to receive a lower quantity under the terms of this SSP 020.

Does the SSP apply to private prescriptions?

Yes. The scope of this SSP 020 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 the SSP?

As a supply in accordance with this SSP 020 is for a lower quantity compared to dispensing the prescription, for NHS prescriptions, no prescription charge will be applicable.

For patient's **EXEMPT** from prescription charges, the exemption should be marked in accordance with the usual procedure. When declaring prescription totals at the end of the month, pharmacists should continue to declare these prescriptions as exempt.

For patient's that **PAY** for their prescriptions, the pharmacist should mark on the prescription that a charge has been paid, however **NO** charge should be taken. When declaring prescription totals at the end of the month, pharmacists should declare these prescriptions as paid. The NHS Business Services Authority will amend total monthly figures to account for prescriptions covered by this SSP 020. In order for the NHS Business Services Authority to appropriately amend the total monthly figures it is critical that the prescription is correctly endorsed with the SSP number SSP 020.

Can pharmacists use their professional judgement to supply an alternative product to patients?

Supply in accordance with this SSP only allows supply of a three-month quantity when the prescription is for a longer duration of treatment. It does not allow the supply of a different product. However, if the pharmacist does not have supply of Ovestin® they should consider whether supply in accordance with SSP 025 would be suitable. Or if they think that an alternative product 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.

How would pharmacists determine a three-month supply?

Where it is not clear from the prescription what constitutes a three-month supply, the pharmacist will need to discuss with the patient **and** use their professional judgment.

What should pharmacists supply if the prescription states less than three months' supply should be dispensed?

If the prescription states that either three months' supply or less is to be supplied to the patient, this SSP 020 does not apply. The pharmacist should dispense the medication in accordance with the prescription and prescription charges are payable.

Can pharmacists supply more than three months' supply?

No, in accordance with this SSP 020, pharmacists will only be able to dispense three months' supply for Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream. Patients should be made aware that under the terms of this SSP 020, the prescription will be deemed complete, and no further supply can be made from the same prescription above the three-month quantity.

What can a pharmacist do if the patient does not consent to receiving the medicine supplied in accordance with this SSP?

Where a patient does not consent to receive a lower quantity in accordance with this SSP 020, the pharmacists should use their professional judgement to determine if other courses of action are appropriate whilst taking into consideration wider supply issues. For example, pharmacists in England must consider under their NHS terms of service if it is "reasonable and appropriate" to supply in accordance with this SSP 020 or another SSP, such as SSP 024 or SSP 025. If the pharmacist concludes that it is not reasonable or appropriate to supply the medication in accordance with any of the SSPs, the pharmacist must consider if they can dispense the prescription in the usual way 'in a reasonable timescale'. If they can, the ordinary obligation to dispense in accordance with the prescription applies. If they cannot, because the pharmacist has insufficient supply to fulfil the prescribed quantity within a reasonable timescale, the pharmacist may return the prescription, but if they do so, the pharmacist must provide the patient with appropriate advice about going back to the prescriber.

In the event that the pharmacist concludes that it is reasonable and appropriate to dispense in accordance with the SSP, but the patient persists in refusing to accept the option of the lesser quantity, the pharmacist may advise the patient that they will dispense in accordance with the SSP or not at all, if that is in accordance with their professional judgement.

The patient retains the right to either accept the professional decision of the pharmacist or to ask for their prescription to be returned to them.

Does the SSP apply to other Hormone Replacement Therapies?

No, this SSP 020 only applies to Ovestin® (estriol 0.1%) 1mg cream.