

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

SSP 039 for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets

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>Example 1: 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 atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30</p>	SSP 039
<p>Example 2: Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free x 150ml</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor selects in system atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free x 150ml</p>	SSP 039

Non-electronic prescription form:

Example	Endorsement
	Option
Example 1: Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30 Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30	SSP 039 Pharmacy contractor endorses atorvastatin 20mg tablets x 30
Example 2: Prescription for atorvastatin (Lipitor®) 20mg chewable tablets x 30 Pharmacy contractor supplies atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free x 150ml	SSP 039 Pharmacy contractor endorses atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free x 150ml

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 this SSP 039 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 039 will be reimbursed as if it was dispensed against a prescription. In this instance, contractors will be reimbursed the Part VIII A reimbursement price for the quantity supplied and endorsed for the specified products listed below:

- Atorvastatin 20mg tablets
- Atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free

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 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 SSP apply to private prescriptions?

Yes. The scope of this SSP 039 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?

Yes, patients who are not exempt from prescription charges would continue to pay for this 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.

How would the pharmacists determine what should be supplied in accordance with this SSP?

The pharmacist will need to discuss with the patient **and** use their professional judgment when determining what should be supplied in accordance with this SSP 039. Where the film-coated tablet is unsuitable for the patient (i.e. the patient is unable to swallow tablets), the pharmacist can assess if supplying the oral suspension is appropriate.

When selecting the appropriate product to substitute, pharmacy contractors should note that the atorvastatin 20mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free is a Special Container and endorse the prescription accordingly.

Can pharmacists use their professional judgement to supply an alternative 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 this 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.