

Dear South East London Primary Care Colleagues:

Feb 2026

Re: Modified-release methylphenidate capsules and tablets– Prescribe by brand

Summary of recommendations:

- **Prescribe methylphenidate modified-release (MR) capsules and tablets by brand**
- **If a patient’s regular brand is unavailable, refer to SPS guidance, and liaise with the community pharmacy to select an alternative brand**
- **If Equasym XL capsules are unavailable seek specialist advice for alternative**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) released a Drug Safety Update in September 2022 outlining risks and caution when switching between different brands of modified-release methylphenidate. In it they signpost to [clinical guidance](#), advising brand prescribing of modified-release methylphenidate.

[Methylphenidate long-acting \(modified-release\) preparations: caution if switching between products due to differences in formulations - GOV.UK](#)

The Specialist Pharmacy Service has produced guidance for when a switch between brands may be necessary, and which brands are interchangeable.

[Prescribing and switching between modified-release methylphenidate – NHS SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

In line with this, SEL formularies ([adults](#) and [paediatrics](#)), [shared care guidelines](#) and the [transfer of care letter](#) have been updated, reinforcing these recommendations.

Local Recommendations for General Practice/Prescribers:	Local Recommendations for Community Pharmacy:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review patients who are prescribed generic methylphenidate MR and establish which brand the patient is stable on/usually taking. • Change any prescriptions on EMIS for generic methylphenidate MR to the brand that the patient is stable on/usually taking. • Should there be any supply issues or concerns with the brand that the patient is stable on/usually taking refer to the SPS advice (hyperlinks above) for an alternative bioequivalent brand, liaise with the patient’s community pharmacy on stock availability and prescribe a new brand as appropriate. • Should there be any supply issues or concerns with Equasym XL capsules, then please seek specialist advice as to which alternative brand can be prescribed (Equasym is not bioequivalent to any other brand), and what additional monitoring or follow up may be required. • For any new request to prescribe Concerta XL confirm with the specialist team whether they can be switched, as per the local recommendation, no patients should be initiated on Concerta XL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For generic prescriptions of methylphenidate MR, establish which brand the patient is stable on/usually taking BEFORE dispensing. • For any patient prescribed methylphenidate modified release tablets or capsules generically, send a request to the GP to re-prescribe as the brand the patient is stable on/usually taking. • If a patient is usually on Equasym XL capsules the patient must be dispensed this brand. Equasym XL capsules are not interchangeable with any other brand.