OFFICE of the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY for HEALTH
15, PALAZZO CASTELLANIA, MERCHANTS STREET, VALLETTA, MALTA

DH Circular 106/2018
DH 1414/2018

6th December 2018

Attention All: Consultants
Medical Officers
Pharmacists
Pharmacy Technicians
Nurses

Re: Deletion of Potassium Chloride 600mg SR tablets from the Formulary

It is being brought to your attention that due to the withdrawal of Slow-K® 600mg tablets from the Maltese market and difficulty in sourcing suitable alternatives, potassium chloride 600mg SR tablets will be deleted from the Government Formulary List (GFL) once stocks are depleted.

Slow-K® is indicated for the correction and/or prevention of hypokalaemia in patients who cannot tolerate or refuse to take liquid or effervescent potassium chloride, or when there is a problem of compliance with these preparations.

The other oral potassium supplements available on the GFL are potassium effervescent tablets and potassium chloride syrup 1mmol/mL. The composition of these potassium supplements is provided in the table below.

Name	Composition
Potassium chloride 600mg SR tablets (Slow-K®)	One tablet contains 600mg potassium chloride as active substance equivalent to 8mmol potassium ion
Potassium chloride effervescent tablets (Sando-K®)	One tablet contains 600mg potassium chloride and 400mg potassium bicarbonate, equivalent to 12mmol potassium ion
Potassium chloride syrup 1mmol/mL (Kay-Cee-L®)	Potassium chloride 7.5% w/v (equivalent to 1mmol of potassium per mL)

Patients taking Slow-K® 600mg tablets are to visit their GP for the alternative potassium supplement to be prescribed. Oral potassium is used for the prevention of hypokalaemia and to compensate for potassium loss.

For further information, please refer to the Direct Healthcare Professional Communication by Medicines Authority submitted on behalf of Novartis Pharma Services Inc. (Annex 1) and to the summary of product characteristics on the Medicines Authority website.

For your attention please.

Dr. Denis Vella Baldacchino
Chief Medical Officer

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Annex 1

Ref: 02/2018/BM
27.04.2018

Direct Healthcare Professional Communication

Emerging Safety Issue for Slow-K® (Potassium chloride) 600 mg Sugar-Coated Tablets

Dear Healthcare Professional,

This DHPC is being issued under the regulatory oversight of the Medicines Authority.

Novartis would like to inform you of the following: Slow-K® is licensed for use in the correction and/or prevention of hypokalaemia. Further to the new ICH Q3D guideline (effective January 1st 2018) Novartis has performed Pb level testing in Slow-K®. The Pb levels found exceed the permitted daily exposure (PDE) for Pb, set forth by ICH Q3D guideline.

Summary

- Based on the review of the data from the batches analyzed the Pb levels in Slow-K® may exceed the PDE, as defined in ICH Q3D guideline, when more than 2 tablets per day are administered.
- For most patients for whom Slow-K® is prescribed for correction of hypokalemia, this may not be a potential safety risk and unlikely to result in Pb-exposure related adverse effects.
- Upon review of cumulative Novartis safety data, there was no stand-alone index case reporting occurrence of adverse event due to the possible exposure to Pb from Slow-K®.
- There have been no safety findings with Slow-K®, either in clinical trials or in post-marketing reports that suggest acute Pb toxicity associated with the product.

Background on the safety concern

Although the Pb levels in Slow-K® product could result in more than the permitted daily exposure, Slow-K® has not been found to be associated with Pb exposure related adverse events based on the review of data from Novartis safety database.

Substitution of Slow-K® with suitable potassium supplement (dietary potassium supplements and/or other oral potassium supplements) should be considered. An example is provided in the below table.

	Slow-K®	**SANDO-K®**	**Kay-Cee-L® Syrup**
Composition	One tablet contains 600mg potassium chloride as active substance equivalent to 8 mmol potassium ion	Effervescent Tablets contain 600mg potassium chloride equivalent to 12mmol potassium ion	Potassium chloride 7.5% w/v (equivalent to 1mmole of potassium per ml)
Dosage Recommendations	Depending on the patient's individual needs, a daily dosage of 2 to 3 sugar-coated tablets (16 to 24mmol K+) should generally suffice to prevent hypokalemia. When correcting hypokalemia, doses of 40 to 50 up to 100 mmol K+ (corresponding to 5 to 6 up to 12 sugar-coated tablets) may be required, depending on the initial plasma K+ concentration.	For serum levels between 2-3 mmol/l, a maximum daily dose of 100-200mmol K+ (8-16 tablets) and for serum levels between 3-4 mmol/l, a maximum daily dose of 50-100 mmol K+ (4-8 tablets) should be considered.	Posology and Method of Administration: "The dosage of Kay-Cee-L Syrup depends on the cause, degree and duration of potassium depletion, and should be adjusted accordingly: Adults: 10 - 50 mL/day in divided amounts after food is usually an adequate dose
Transition Plan	Patients receiving 3 Tablets of Slow-K® Equivalent to 24mmol of Potassium	Equivalent to 2 Sando-K Effervescent Tablets containing 24mmol of Potassium	Equivalent to 24mL of Kay-Cee-L Syrup containing 24mmol of Potassium
	Patients receiving 6-12 Tablets of Slow-K® Equivalent to 48mmol - 96mmol of Potassium	Equivalent to 4-8 Sando-K Effervescent Tablets containing 48mmol -96mmol of Potassium	For patients receiving 6 tablets, equivalent to 48mLof Kay-Cee-L Syrup containing 48 mmol of Potassium. For Patients requiring higher doses, other alternatives to be considered.

For patients requiring a higher dose, or having severe hypokalemia, IV potassium supplements can also be administered based on physicians' judgement and with monitoring. Please refer to the summary of product characteristics on the Medicines Authority website for further information on the approved indications and other information.

Slow-K® will no longer be imported or distributed in Malta once the available stocks are depleted.

Reference:

[1] NTP monograph on health effects of low-level lead. NTP monograph. 2012(1):xiii, xv-148.

Call for Reporting

Healthcare professionals are reminded to continue to report suspected adverse reactions associated with Slow-K® in accordance with the national spontaneous reporting system. Any suspected adverse reactions and medication errors can be reported via the national Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) reporting system. Report forms can be downloaded from www.medicinesauthority.gov.mt/adrportal and posted to Post-licensing directorate, Medicines Authority, Sir Temi Żammit Buildings, Malta Life Sciences Park, San Ġwann SĠN 3000, Malta or sent by email to postlicensing.medicinesauthority@gov.mt

Healthcare Professionals may also report any adverse events suspected to be associated with the use of Slow-K® to Novartis Pharma Services Inc., Representative Office, Malta, by phone on +356 21222872, by fax on +356 22487219 or e-mail at drug_safety.malta@novartis.com. (Marketing Authorisation Holder: Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Limited. Frimley Business Park, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 7SR, United Kingdom. Local Representative: Novartis Pharma Services Inc., Representative Office Malta.)

Company Contact Point

Novartis places the highest priority on patient health. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Novartis Pharma Services Inc., Representative Office Malta. Tel No.: +356 21222872, Email address: novartis.malta@novartis.com.

Yours faithfully,

Post-Licensing Directorate
Medicines Authority

Disclaimer
This Direct Healthcare Professional Communication has been submitted to you on behalf of Novartis Pharma Services Inc