

## Using the New Zealand Formulary

# Hidden Gems: Locating product and funding information

At the click of a button, The New Zealand Formulary provides up-to-date information on product specifications/descriptions, excipients, availability and funding, with links to the Medicine Datasheet and Special Authority forms.

### How to find detailed product information for medicines in New Zealand Formulary (NZF)

Comprehensive product information can be found in the New Zealand formulary, by expanding the **+** icon for each heading in the drug monographs. The information is intentionally not visible at first, to give an uncluttered, single-frame view of the forms of a medicine that are available.

Below the **Dose** field is the preparation group box; click on the **+** icon beside each **product/strength** for product specific details, or the **+** sign beside the blue **Medicine** heading to view all products that are available for this medicine. The process is the same for combination product monographs.

### Using the “hovers”

The New Zealand Formulary frequently uses hover functionality, to keep the screen as uncluttered as possible until further information is required. Hovering the computer mouse over a symbol or words with a dashed underline, will reveal a box with information relating to that icon. The information will remain visible while the mouse is hovered. Click rather than hover the mouse if you would like the information to stay in a fixed display; to close the hover display box, click the **x** button in the top right hand corner.

### Links to other information

Words or phrases with solid underlines can be clicked for links to other places in the formulary, or to other relevant web pages. Users are directed to the appropriate place within

other websites, rather than having to search a website for the required information.

 Please place feedback if any links are not working for you.

### Understanding the icons

*Italics* Indicates brand name; there can be several brands available for any medicine.

 Indicates the product is a prescription medicine. Further details of the legal classification that relate to pack sizes, saleable quantities and criteria for supply by registered allied health practitioners are found by hovering over 'legal classification' at the top right corner of the preparation group box.

 C2 Indicates the medicine is a Controlled Drug; the class (B1 to B3, C1 to C7) is specified.

 Links to the Medicines Datasheet; datasheets are brand specific. Not all medicine products have a datasheet but all available datasheets are included in the link.

 Links to the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) sheets, where available. Pharmaceutical companies are responsible for producing CMI. However, in New Zealand it is not a legal requirement for them to do so. The CMI is written by pharmaceutical companies using guidelines set by Medsafe.

 Indicates the product is fully subsidised by PHARMAC. Any

restrictions, including a link to any Special Authority forms, and any direction that a pharmacist must dispense a three-month supply all at once, are found here.

 Indicates the product is partially subsidised by PHARMAC. The patient will be required to pay the difference between the subsidised amount and the actual cost of the medicine, including mark-ups and taxes. The total payable by the patient will therefore depend on the quantity prescribed.

 Indicates a Restricted Medicine, which may be sold in a pharmacy by a registered pharmacist, in accordance with legal limitations (provision of advice, quantity, labelling; hover over legal classification' for full details).

 Indicates a Pharmacy Only Medicine, which may be sold in a pharmacy in accordance with legal limitations (provision of advice, quantity, labelling; hover over 'legal classification' for full details).

A Restricted or Pharmacy Only Medicine may also be included in the New Zealand Pharmaceutical Schedule and subsidised on a prescription written by a doctor.

 Indicates a General Sale Medicine

 Cautionary Advisory Labels provide brief, important information for patients. Medicines dispensed by pharmacies usually include this information within their labelling or as a supplementary yellow label. Additional comments provide practical advice on how to take the medicine.

**Section 29** Indicates Section 29 medicines that are not approved by Medsafe for marketing within New Zealand. Unapproved medicines are not usually subsidised by PHARMAC.

## Excipients can be clinically important

An excipient is a component or ingredient in a product formulation that is not the active ingredient. Excipients can cause adverse reactions, such as allergy. In addition, large quantities of some salts and preservatives may cause a clinically significant adverse effect.

When the information is available from the manufacturer, the excipients that may be of risk are noted; not all excipients are listed. Examples include aspartame, benzyl alcohol, polysorbate and gelatine. More information can be obtained from medicines manufacturers, or a Medicines Information service.

## A reminder about searching

New Zealand Formulary feedback has highlighted some problems users are having with searching for a medicine. Note that the left hand search box requests the generic name of a medicine. It is necessary to use the right hand box if searching for a brand name, condition or phrase.

## There are two spellings for some medicines

The New Zealand Formulary is based on the British National Formulary. In recent years, the British National Formulary has moved towards using rINNs (recommended International Nonproprietary Names), such as sulfasalazine or beclometasone, instead of BANs (British Approved Names), such as sulphasalazine or beclomethasone. This is also in line with the World Health Organisation's recommendations for the nomenclature of drugs.

The New Zealand Formulary uses rINNs for drug names. However, both spellings are currently included in medicine monographs, and are searchable within the formulary.

## Special Authority forms

Links to printable PHARMAC Special Authority forms are found alongside the full  or partial  subsidy icons or by hovering over then clicking on [\(restrictions\)](#).

## User feedback

 Feedback to the New Zealand Formulary is welcome. Use the "feedback" tab alongside the "search" and "browse" tabs at the top of each page. Include a contact email to ensure you receive a personal reply.



Visit: [www.nzformulary.org](http://www.nzformulary.org)