

# Hydrocortisone experiences a price hike

Several presentations of hydrocortisone have seen their average generic prices almost double in the past month, putting them on top of the table representing the fastest price risers since April (see Figure 3). And price deals were off for omeprazole capsules as the lowest-available prices leapt forward (see Figure 1).

Independent retail pharmacists and dispensing doctors were paying on average up to 95% more in May for hydrocortisone cream. Its lowest prices also rose, indicating general shortages.

However, hydrocortisone still has some way to go before it emulates amlodipine, which cost more for pharmacists and doctors

in England and Wales to buy in April than they were reimbursed by the government for dispensing it (*Generics bulletin*, 8 April 2005, page 14). Closest to the Drug Tariff price was hydrocortisone cream 0.5% in the 15g size which cost £0.60 (US\$1.10) on average in the market compared with £0.80 in the Drug Tariff.

The statins, meanwhile, continued their price declines, bringing closer the day when simvastatin 10mg tablets can be bought for £0.01 each. Average ciprofloxacin prices also took a tumble, although the falls were not always reflected in the lowest prices available (see Figures 1 and 2).

BIGGEST FALLERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 20	£0.55	+12	£1.72	-40
Ciprofloxacin tabs 250mg 20	£0.44	-17	£1.13	-33
Fluconazole caps 150mg 1	£0.27	-4	£0.61	-29
Cetirizine tabs 10mg 30	£0.32	-3	£0.55	-22
Bisoprolol tabs 5mg 28	£0.45	+2	£0.74	-19
Famotidine tabs 40mg 28	£3.00	-9	£5.38	-18
Timolol eye drops 0.25% 5ml	£0.45	+2	£0.65	-18
Bumetanide tabs 5mg 28	£0.84	+4	£1.42	-17
Enalapril tabs 10mg 28	£0.23	±0	£0.43	-17
Betahistine tabs 16mg 84	£1.18	-6	£2.06	-17

FAST MOVERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Amlodipine tabs 5mg 28	£3.00	-3	£4.51	±0
Amlodipine tabs 10mg 28	£4.75	±0	£6.79	-3
Carvedilol tabs 3.125mg 28	£0.71	-9	£2.35	+15
Carvedilol tabs 6.25mg 28	£0.80	-5	£2.35	+9
Carvedilol tabs 12.5mg 28	£0.89	-1	£2.91	+15
Carvedilol tabs 25mg 28	£1.05	-1	£3.58	+12
Ciprofloxacin tabs 250mg 10	£0.38	+3	£1.06	+4
Ciprofloxacin tabs 500mg 10	£0.45	+2	£1.14	-25
Ciprofloxacin tabs 750mg 10	£0.34	-6	£1.94	-44
Citalopram tabs 10mg 28	£0.78	-11	£1.78	+6
Citalopram tabs 20mg 28	£0.87	-8	£2.27	+9
Citalopram tabs 40mg 28	£2.00	-9	£4.77	+10
Clarithromycin tabs 250mg 14	£4.49	-16	£7.42	-3
Clarithromycin tabs 500mg 14	£8.99	±0	£13.49	-2
Lisinopril tabs 2.5mg 28	£0.24	-4	£0.51	-9
Lisinopril tabs 5mg 28	£0.33	-11	£0.59	-11
Lisinopril tabs 10mg 28	£0.45	-13	£0.76	-12
Lisinopril tabs 20mg 28	£0.80	-10	£1.20	-12
Omeprazole caps 10mg 28	£2.75	+112	£5.00	-4
Omeprazole caps 20mg 28	£4.79	+268	£8.92	-3
Paroxetine tabs 20mg 30	£2.10	-16	£5.05	+5
Paroxetine tabs 30mg 30	£16.95	±0	£21.43	-1
Pravastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.70	+1	£2.18	-25
Pravastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.80	-27	£3.55	-25
Pravastatin tabs 40mg 28	£0.99	-18	£3.75	-16
Ramipril caps 1.25mg 28	£0.45	±0	£0.85	-6
Ramipril caps 2.5mg 28	£0.57	+10	£1.00	-6
Ramipril caps 5mg 28	£0.65	-12	£1.18	-14
Ramipril caps 10mg 28	£0.91	-8	£1.56	-16
Simvastatin tabs 10mg 28	£0.35	±0	£0.68	-12
Simvastatin tabs 20mg 28	£0.43	-4	£0.85	-18
Simvastatin tabs 40mg 28	£1.45	+7	£2.46	-12

Figure 1 (right): Comparison between the periods 1-30 April and 1-25 May 2005 of the lowest and average UK market prices of fast-moving generics. Each average price was calculated from at least 44 data points (Source - WaveData).

Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (below): Biggest changes recorded between the periods 1-30 April and 1-25 May 2005 in lowest and average UK market prices of products taken from a basket of about 120 commonly-dispensed generics. The basket specifically excludes the 'fast movers' shown right, but includes other presentations of the same active substances. Each average price was calculated from at least 20 data points (Source - WaveData).

BIGGEST RISERS				
Product/Strength/Pack size	Lowest price	Change (%)	Average price	Change (%)
Hydrocortisone cream 1% 30g	£0.56	+10	£1.21	+95
Hydrocortisone cream 1% 15g	£0.30	+3	£0.77	+91
Hydrocortisone cream 0.5% 15g	£0.28	±0	£0.60	+90
Oxazepam tabs 15mg 28	£0.62	+5	£1.29	+63
Amoxicillin caps 250mg 21	£0.27	±0	£0.63	+46
Hydrocortisone oint. 1% 30g	£0.56	+8	£0.89	+42
Prednisolone tabs 1mg 28	£0.24	+4	£0.43	+42
Oxazepam tabs 10mg 28	£0.57	±0	£1.03	+41
Diazepam tabs 2mg 28	£0.14	±0	£0.31	+39
Chlorpromazine tabs 100mg 28	£0.82	+6	£1.33	+39

**PRICE WATCH ..... UK** highlights generics price changes in the UK market and appears exclusively in every issue of *Generics bulletin*, courtesy of the Pharma TouchStone service of WaveData.

WaveData collects and collates pricing information from a number of European countries. In the UK, pricing information about generics, brands and parallel imports is gathered from offers made to independent retail pharmacists and dispensing doctors by wholesalers and generic manufacturers. WaveData

collates this data and publishes the results as its Pharma TouchStone service. This is designed to give customers of the service fast, accurate, real-time access to current generic prices.

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