# Oral antihistamines – which are available in lactose-free formulations?

Prepared by UK Medicines Information ([UKMi](http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/ukmi/about/default.asp?pageRef=1)) pharmacists for NHS healthcare professionals

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## Background

In adults with lactose intolerance, ingestion of lactose may cause gastrointestinal symptoms. Symptoms vary according to the quantity of lactose ingested, the patient’s ability to digest lactose and the amount and type of colonic flora. Lactose is widely used in pharmaceutical formulations as a diluent or carrier. The dose of lactose in most pharmaceuticals is usually less than 2g per day and is unlikely to cause severe gastrointestinal symptoms except in cases of severe lactose intolerance [1].

For patients with severe lactose intolerance, the lactose content of medications should be determined before prescribing. For further information about lactose intolerance and medicines see Medicines Q&A ‘What factors need to be considered when prescribing for lactose intolerant adults?’[1].

## Answer

The table below gives details of lactose free formulations of oral antihistamines. Included are single active constituent preparations that are used for allergic conditions and are listed in the electronic Medicines Compendium (eMC).

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| **Antihistamine** | **Lactose-free formulation** | **Manufacturer** | **Ref** |
| **Sedating antihistamines** |
| Alimemazine tartrate | Alimemazine Tartrate 7.5mg/5ml Syrup  | ADVANZ Pharma | [2] |
| Alimemazine Tartrate 7.5mg/5ml Syrup  | Thame Laboratories | [3] |
| Alimemazine Tartrate 7.5mg/5ml Syrup  | Zentiva | [4] |
| Alimemazine Tartrate 30mg/5ml Syrup  | ADVANZ Pharma | [5] |
| Alimemazine Tartrate 30mg/5ml Syrup  | Thame Laboratories | [6] |
| Alimemazine Tartrate 30mg/5ml Syrup  | Zentiva | [7] |
| Chlorphenamine maleate | Boots Allergy Relief 1 Year Plus Antihistamine 2mg/5ml Syrup | The Boots Company PLC | [8] |
| Piriton Syrup | GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare | [9] |
| Promethazine hydrochloride | Phenergan Elixir | SANOFI | [10] |

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| **Antihistamine** | **Lactose-free formulation** | **Manufacturer** | **Ref** |
| **Non-sedating antihistamines** |
| Bilastine | Ilaxten 20mg Tablets | A Menarini Farmaceutica Internazionale SRL | [11] |
| Cetirizine dihydrochloride | Benadryl Allergy Children’s 1mg/ml Oral Solution | McNeil Products Ltd | [12] |
| Benadryl Allergy Children’s 6+ 1mg/ml Oral Solution | McNeil Products Ltd | [13] |
| Benadryl Allergy Liquid Release 10mg Capsules | McNeil Products Ltd | [14] |
| Zirtek Allergy Solution 1mg/ml Oral Solution | UCB Pharma Ltd | [15] |
| Cetirizine hydrochloride | Boots Hayfever & Allergy Relief Syrup | The Boots Company PLC | [16] |
| Care Hayfever and Allergy 1mg/ml Solution | Thornton & Ross Ltd | [17] |
| Cetirizine Hydrochloride 5mg/5ml Oral Solution | Pinewood Healthcare | [18] |
| Cetirizine Hydrochloride 5mg/5ml Oral Solution | Cipla EU Ltd | [19] |
| Cetirizine Hydrochloride 5mg/5ml Solution | Fannin UK/Kent Pharma UK Ltd | [20] |
| Piriteze Allergy 1mg/ml Syrup | GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare | [21] |
| Ziralton Allergy Relief for Children 5mg/5ml Oral Solution | Pinewood Healthcare | [22] |
| Desloratadine  | Desloratadine 0.5mg/ml Oral Solution | Accord-UK Ltd | [23] |
| Desloratadine Actavis 5mg Film-Coated Tablets | Accord-UK Ltd | [24] |
| Desloratadine Mylan 5mg Film-Coated Tablets | Mylan | [25] |
| NeoClarityn Oral Solution | Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd | [26] |

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| **Antihistamine** | **Lactose-free formulation** | **Manufacturer** | **Ref** |
| Fexofenadine hydrochloride  | Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 120mg Film-Coated Tablets | Cipla EU Ltd | [27] |
| Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 120mg Film-Coated Tablets | Healthcare Pharma Ltd | [28] |
| Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 120mg Film-Coated Tablets | Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories (UK) Ltd | [29] |
| Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 180mg Film-Coated Tablets | Cipla EU Ltd | [30] |
| Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 180mg Film-Coated Tablets | Healthcare Pharma Ltd | [31] |
| Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 180mg Film-Coated Tablets | Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories (UK) Ltd | [32] |
| Telfast 30mg Film-coated Tablets | SANOFI | [33] |
| Telfast 120mg Film-Coated Tablets | SANOFI | [34] |
|  | Telfast 180mg Film-Coated Tablets | SANOFI | [35] |
| Levocetirizine dihydrochloride | Xyzal 0.5mg/ml Oral Solution | UCB Pharma Ltd  | [36] |
|  | Lorapaed Allergy Relief 5mg/5ml Oral Solution | Pinewood Healthcare | [37] |
| Loratadine 5mg/5ml Syrup | Mylan | [38] |
| Loratadine 5mg/5ml Syrup | Pinewood Healthcare | [39] |
| Rupatadine fumarate | Rupatadine 1mg/ml Oral Solution | Aspire Pharma Ltd | [40] |

Limitations

* Information for this Q&A has been taken from the eMC. Generic products not listed in the eMC, ‘specials’ and lactose-free complementary medicines are not covered by this Q&A.
* The individual Summaries of Product Characteristics should be checked before prescribing as formulations may change.
* It has been assumed that all information concerning lactose in manufacturers’ Summaries of Product Characteristics is complete and correct.
* Although the ingredients of the products contain no obvious source of lactose, manufacturers often state that they cannot guarantee that the products have not been in contact with lactose during the manufacturing process.
* Antihistamines which are not licensed for the treatment of allergic conditions have been excluded from this Q&A.

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### Search strategy

* In-house database/resources: British National Formulary. Accessed via [www.medicinescomplete.com](http://www.medicinescomplete.com/) [Online] Antihistamines. Accessed 11/09/2020.
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* Electronic Medicines Compendium Accessed via: [www.medicines.org.uk/emc/](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/) : search terms used = acrivastine, alimemazine, bilastine, cetirizine, chlorphenamine, desloratadine, fexofenadine, levocetirizine, loratadine, mizolastine, promethazine, rupatadine. Accessed 11/09/2020.