



FACT SHEET – TAMIFLU®

August 2007

Issue

Concerns have been raised about the availability of Tamiflu, particularly in Queensland. This Fact Sheet sets out to ensure media has the correct information in response to those fears.

As reported in the latest National Influenza Surveillance Report, the number of laboratory confirmed influenza notifications to date for 2007 is more than double the peak of influenza notifications in 2006. In what is the most severe influenza season for a number of years the number of people presenting to GPs and emergency departments continues to rise.¹

Key Facts

What is Tamiflu

Tamiflu is an antiviral medicine that blocks the action of the neuraminidase enzyme on the surface of the influenza virus. When neuraminidase is inhibited, the virus is not able to spread to and infect other cells in the body.²

Tamiflu is indicated for the treatment and prevention of infections due to influenza A and B virus in people one year of age and older.²

Tamiflu is the first and only oral antiviral treatment to be approved by the TGA for both the treatment and prevention of influenza types A and B in both adults and children from the age of one and over. It is available in capsules for adults and in a convenient liquid suspension form for children.

Tamiflu is not available on the PBS and a five day treatment course costs approximately \$50. This is the cost for both capsules and the liquid suspension. Tamiflu is NOT a vaccine.

Tamiflu is only available on prescription and is most effective as a treatment for infection if it is taken within 48 hours of initial symptoms.^{2,3}

Tamiflu may be given as a preventive measure either during an outbreak of influenza or following close contact with an infected individual.^{2,4} The peak season for influenza in Australia is July to August.

Supply

Roche Australia has sufficient supply to fulfill all current seasonal influenza orders in Australia.

Roche is working closely with both pharmacies and wholesalers to ensure Tamiflu stock is delivered within 24 hours of orders being placed and in some instances where possible, on the same day.

Tamiflu is a Schedule 4 medication, which means that all patients with influenza MUST have a prescription from the doctor before a pharmacy will supply the treatment.

As is usual with all pharmaceuticals, they are supplied to community pharmacies via a wholesaler (API, Sigma and Symbion Health), who are required to carry sufficient stock.

Pharmacies who do not have sufficient stock to meet this unprecedented demand are able to place orders through their wholesalers for delivery same day.

Roche Products have no back orders of Tamiflu to fill, orders that are received are given immediate priority. Wholesalers have met a 17 fold increase in demand for Tamiflu in Queensland over the past two months with regular supply from Roche and emergency supplies from interstate warehouses.

Government agencies have acquired supplies of antiviral medication for pandemic purposes (see below). For the current situation a distinction should be made between pandemic preparedness and the management of a seasonal influenza outbreak.

Availability of Tamiflu

Under Federal Government regulations Tamiflu is only available with a prescription from a General Practitioner.

Tamiflu is available from the manufacturer, Roche Products.

In New Zealand a pharmacist can dispense Tamiflu without a prescription during the influenza season (May – September). This is not the case in Australia.

AVIAN/Pandemic influenza information

Federal Government

Many experts believe that the current avian influenza strain, known as influenza A (H5N1) is the most likely candidate to evolve further to cause a potential global influenza pandemic.⁵

The Australian Federal Government has a stockpile of antiviral medication as part of its influenza pandemic preparedness plan.⁶

Any inquiries about Government stock levels, Federal or State, and how they are to be deployed should be directed to the relevant Government Departments.

Latest information

For the most recent information about influenza from the Department of Health & Ageing click on the link:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-dept-dept003.htm>

For further information, contact Libby Day, Corporate Communications, Roche Products on 0407 060 045.

References:

1. National Influenza Surveillance Report. Report No. 5 Week ending 4 August 2007. <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-surveil-ozflu-flucurr.htm> . Accessed 14.08.2007.
2. TGA Approved Tamiflu Product Information dated 13 Sept 2006 with date of most recent amendment 12 March 2007.
3. Aoki et al., (2003) Early administration of oral oseltamivir increases the benefits of influenza treatment. 51: 123-129.
4. Hayden et al., (2004) Management of influenza in households: a prospective randomized comparison of oseltamivir treatment with or without postexposure prophylaxis. J. Infect. Dis. 189: 440-449.
5. WHO. Avian Influenza: Assessing the pandemic threat. 2005, <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/H5N1-9reduit.pdf> . Accessed 14.08.2007.
6. The Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza. <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-pandemic-ahmppi.htm> . Accessed 14.08.2007

PBS Information: This product is not listed on the PBS

Tamiflu (oseltamivir) Minimum Product Information

Indications

Treatment of influenza A and B viruses in adults and children one year and over. Prevention of influenza in adults and children one year and over.

Dosage

Treatment: Adults and adolescents 75 mg twice daily. Paediatric patients: <15 kg : 30 mg twice daily; 15-23 kg: 45 mg twice daily; 22-40 kg 60: mg twice daily; >40 kg: 75 mg twice daily. Duration of treatment is for 5 days. Treatment should be initiated within 48 hours of symptom onset. *Prevention:* Adults and adolescents 75 mg daily for 10 days. Paediatric patients: <15 kg : 30 mg once daily; 15-23 kg: 45 mg once daily; 22-40 kg 60: mg once daily; >40 kg: 75 mg once daily for 10 days. Treatment should begin within two days of exposure.

Contraindications, Precautions and Side Effects

TAMIFLU is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to any component of the product. Safety and efficacy in paediatric patients have not been established in children aged less than 1 year of age. TAMIFLU should not be used in children under 1 year of age. Caution is advised when administering to patients with renal failure. The most common side effects include vomiting, nausea, insomnia, headache and fatigue. * Psychiatric disorders/Nervous system disorders: Neuropsychiatric events such as convulsion and those associated with delirium have been reported during TAMIFLU administration in patients with influenza. In rare cases, the delirium resulted in accidental injury. The contribution of TAMIFLU to those events is unknown. Neuropsychiatric events have also been reported in patients with influenza who were not taking TAMIFLU. Patients with influenza should be closely monitored for signs of abnormal behaviour throughout the treatment period.

Please review the complete Product Information before prescribing this medicine. A full copy of the Product Information is available on request from Roche Products Pty Limited.

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* Please note change to Product Information. Full Product Information can be accessed at www.roche-australia.com