

# Reducing waste from single use plastic in the prescribing of oestrogen pessaries

For my QI project I have been exploring changes we can make in the day to day practice that have a positive impact for the environment as well as save money. One small change is to switch the form of oestrogen pessaries we prescribe for post-menopausal urogenital symptoms.

By switching to Vagirux rather than prescribing Vagifem or generic Estradiol we can reduce both the volume of single use plastic we use and the cost to the NHS.

**Same drug. Same dose. Same regime. 1 applicator/pack instead of 24. £11.34 instead of £16.72.**

We will be switching most of our existing patients across to **Vagirux** and placing a prompt on SystemOne to encourage you to prescribe this instead of the alternatives.

I have discussed this with a clinical pharmacist at the CCG who is supportive of me taking this beyond the scope of our practice. Many CCGs around the country have now made **Vagirux** first line for the reasons above.

If you want to discuss further please do get in touch.

Abby Lewis-Barned, GP registrar



	Vagifem / generic Estradiol (24 applicators, £16.72)	Vagirux (1 applicator, £11.34)
Plastic applicators per patient/year (first year of use)	120	5
Cost per patient/year (first year of use)	£83.60	£56.70
Plastic applicators for Roseworth Surgery practice population/year	3418	143
Cost for Roseworth Surgery practice population/year	£2390.96	£1621.62

## Vagirux: environmentally sustainable design and reliable supply

And a positive experience for her



Less waste than single use applicators<sup>1,2</sup>



Uses before disposal of the applicator<sup>1</sup>



A positive user experience, with handling rated as "problem-free" by the majority of users in a focus group<sup>3</sup>

### Applicators and packaging as supplied

**Vagifem packaging<sup>2</sup>**  
 24<sup>1</sup> applicators in individually sealed foil and 24 tablets in a blister pack  
 £16.72<sup>1</sup>

In the UK, every tablet of Vagifem is supplied with an applicator, which between August 2019 and July 2020 totaled **16.3 million single-use plastic applicators**.<sup>11,5</sup>

**Vagirux packaging<sup>1</sup>**  
 1 applicator sealed in foil and 24 tablets in a blister pack  
 £11.34

With 24-tablet packs of Vagirux and a reusable applicator per pack, **this could save 15.6 million plastic applicators from landfill**.<sup>11,4,5</sup>



### Supply you can trust

Vagirux is manufactured via a third-party contract with a European manufacturer based in Germany. Gedeon Richter has a long-standing relationship with this manufacturer and they have had an excellent track record proving to be very reliable.

The product is transported from the factory in Germany by Gedeon Richter's own transport system and is not reliant on any other company.

In addition, Gedeon Richter generally holds stock levels in the UK of up to 6 months based on current market usage levels. This helps to mitigate against the risk of any interruptions in supply.

<sup>1</sup>In 12 of 13 participants. <sup>2</sup>Calculation based on 24-tablet pack sizes. Also supplied as 16-tablet packs where marketed. <sup>3</sup>Gedeon Richter, VAGIRUX (estradiol 10 microgram) vaginal tablets, Summary of Product Characteristics. <sup>4</sup>Novo Nordisk, VAGIFEM (estradiol 10 microgram) vaginal tablets, Summary of Product Characteristics, September 2018. Available at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/5719> (Last accessed: November 2020). <sup>5</sup>Gedeon Richter Plc, Data on File: Vagirux 2 - Therapeutic equivalence and systemic exposure study, September 2020. <sup>6</sup>NHS Business Services Authority, Drug Tariff, November 2020.