

Prescribing Guidance - Melatonin Product Choice

NHS Gloucestershire CCG recommends the use of Circadin 2mg MR tablets where possible for the provision of the required Melatonin dose.

If immediate release characteristics are required, then crushing the appropriate number of Circadin 2mg MR tablets should be considered to provide a “standard release” dose ¹.

When an immediate release dose is necessary, patients or their carers should be provided with advice on tablet crushing. A patient information leaflet is available for this purpose in the [Prescribing Guidance](#) section of the Gloucestershire CCG Live intranet site (a copy of the wording is also attached as p3 for your information)

In situations where, based on the assessment of individual patient circumstances, Circadin MR tablets, either whole or crushed, are not considered appropriate, then alternative prescribing choices should be made.

This advice is endorsed by the NHS Gloucestershire CCG Drug and Therapeutics Committee with support from the secondary care specialists based in the teams stated below:

- GHNHSFT Paediatrics Team July 2014
- ²Gether Adult Mental Health/Learning Difficulties Team July 2014

Reference:

- 1- In-Vitro dissolution of Circadin tablets whole, divided and crushed: Data provided by Flynn Pharmaceuticals (manufacturer of Circadin 2mg MR)

Supporting information:

Melatonin products prescribing choices guidance – see overleaf

NHS Gloucestershire CCG Patient Information on the crushing of melatonin MR tablets

NHS Gloucestershire CCG Melatonin Product Choice Guidance

Prescribing Choice	Rational for choice	Comments
<p>Preferred Choice Circadin® 2mg tablets (modified release)</p> <p>1- Swallowed whole 2- Crushed prior to consumption</p> <p>(NB: After crushing this medication should NOT be administered covertly but always with the patient's full knowledge and consent.)</p> <p>MHRA Risk Hierarchy- Licensed product used off label</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed product and CCG product of choice where melatonin required. Safer choice under the MHRA Risk Hierarchy Available routinely via community pharmacies, therefore less chances of patient inconvenience NHS Drug tariff item which means price is known and does not fluctuate between suppliers* Less expensive (in general) than alternative "specials" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncrushed Circadin tablet is a modified release product- Take 1-2 hours before bedtime. Use in children and adults under 55yrs of age is unlicensed. Inform patient / guardian that leaflet will differ slightly from their circumstances. Crushing will offer immediate release characteristics. Also for swallowing difficulties, it may be crushed and mixed with water, or with a small amount of soft food e.g. yoghurt, jam etc. (immediately prior to dose). If crushed, take 20-30 minutes before bedtime. Prescribe in even dose increments of 2mg Ensure prescribed dosage indicates "CRUSHED" which should then also be written on the label. Feeding tubes- crush to fine powder and mix with 15-30ml of water. Flush tube with 30ml water before and after medication given.
<p>Alternative choice- only to be used in exceptional circumstances where Circadin (whole or crushed) is not suitable.</p> <p>Bio-Melatonin tablets 3mg Melatonin Capsules 2mg and 3mg Unlicensed Product used in an unlicensed way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special order which often means delayed receipt Often more costly to obtain than the known price Circadin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate release product, whether swallowed whole or opened Contents can be mixed with water or a small amount of soft food if necessary (immediately prior to dose)
<p>Melatonin Liquid 5mg/5ml (1mg/ml)</p> <p>Unlicensed Product used in an unlicensed way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above use only if crushed Circadin and opened capsules are not suitable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State alcohol-free / sugar free to ensure appropriate paediatric product is supplied if necessary.

- Non-Circadin product costs vary greatly depending on the supplier
- Use of Circadin (licensed or off-label) is less expensive and also carries less risk of product defects etc.
- *NHS Drug tariff prices are subject to change, albeit rarely with proprietary products.

NHS Gloucestershire CCG Melatonin Product Choice Guidance

NB this is a sample version.

The version for printing can be found and downloaded from the CCG Live website at https://ccglive.glos.nhs.uk/intranet/media/k2/attachments/Prescribing%20Guidance/Circadin_Melatonin_Crushing_Tips.pdf

The printable version at the website above provides two copies per A4 for handing to patients.



Circadin™ 2mg MR Tablet - Crushing Tips

If your prescription has recently been changed to Circadin 2mg MR tablets from an alternative product, and you have been asked to crush the tablets prior to taking the dose, the following information may be useful.

Crushing tablets is usually quite simple, and some techniques are easier than others

- Purchase a tablet crushing device from your local community pharmacy. They are often made of plastic and cost just a few pounds. Some example prices from a range of high street and independent pharmacies (and internet pharmacies) range from £2 upwards, with many being less than £5. They are reusable and can be rinsed and dried after use, and can be used to crush many other tablets also.
- If you are unable to purchase a tablet crusher, then you can call the Medicines Management Team on 0300 421 1565. If you get through to voicemail, leave a message with your phone number and somebody will call you back to arrange provision of a tablet crusher.
- Alternatively you may place the tablet between two similarly sized dessert spoons (so that one spoon sits into the spoon below it). Now make a small gap between the spoons, and place one tablet between these surfaces and gently squeeze the spoons together. The tablet should break up without shooting out. Further crushing will make a finer powder. Please note that it is not necessary to crush to a very fine powder, as once the tablet is roughly crushed, it will offer “immediate release” characteristics as desired. Repeat if more than one tablet is required to provide the dose.
- Crushed tablets may be mixed with a little water, or soft food to aid swallowing.
- If you have any queries, please speak with your community pharmacist, the practice support pharmacist, or your GP at your regular practice.