



Cholestyramine Shortage

TABLE 1: Cholestyramine resin products¹

Product	DIN	Manufacturer
JAMP-Cholestyramine 4 g/sachet oral powder	02478595	JAMP Pharma Corporation
Cholestyramine-Odan 4 g/sachet oral powder	02455609	Odan Laboratories Ltd.
Olestyr 4 g/sachet oral powder	02210320	Pharmascience Inc.
Olestyr Light 4 g/sachet oral powder	00890960	Pharmascience Inc.

Health Canada–approved indications of cholestyramine resin:²

- Treatment of elevated serum cholesterol as an adjunct to diet and exercise in patients with primary hypercholesterolemia or combined hypercholesterolemia and hyperlipidemia
- Treatment of pruritus associated with partial biliary obstruction
- Treatment of diarrhea associated with excess fecal bile acids due to short bowel syndrome

Management Options:

There are 2 other resin products similar to cholestyramine available in Canada: colesevelam and colestipol. Unfortunately, these other resins are also facing supply challenges and they do not share all of the same indications as cholestyramine. Product availability will have to be confirmed before considering using another resin to replace cholestyramine. Recommended dosages are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Recommended dosages for resin products^{1,3,4}

Drug	Indication	Strength
Cholestyramine	Dyslipidemia	4 g PO 3-4 times daily
	Pruritus associated with partial biliary obstruction	4 g PO 1-3 times daily
	Diarrhea associated with excess fecal bile acids	4 g PO daily
Colesevelam	Dyslipidemia	3.75 g powder PO daily OR 3 × 625 mg tablets PO BID
	Diarrhea associated with excess fecal bile acids (not approved by Health Canada)	3.75 g powder PO daily OR 3 × 625 mg tablets PO BID
Colestipol	Dyslipidemia	2 g tablets PO once or twice daily Maintenance 2-16 g daily Granules are not currently available
	Diarrhea associated with excess fecal bile acids (not approved by Health Canada)	2 g tablets PO once or twice daily, titrated up to 16 g daily Granules are not currently available

This document has been reviewed and endorsed by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology.

References

1. Health Canada. Drug product database online query [internet]. Ottawa: Health Canada; 2024. Available from: <https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/index-eng.jsp>. Accessed February 2, 2024.
2. Pharmascience Inc. *Olestyr* [product monograph]. Revised February 9, 2022. Available from: https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00064696.PDF.
3. Paquette M, Baass A. *Dyslipidemias* [internet]. June 14, 2023. Available from: <https://cps.pharmacists.ca>. Subscription required. Accessed February 2, 2024.
4. Sadowski DC, Camilleri M, Chey WD et al. Canadian Association of Gastroenterology clinical practice guideline on the management of bile acid diarrhea. *J Can Assoc Gastroenterol* 2020;3(1):e10-e27.