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CHANGE OF PACK SIZE FOR IRON TABLETS AND IRON & FOLIC ACID TABLETS

**Background**
Iron, and iron plus folic acid supplementation is used as a public health intervention for the purpose of improving pregnancy outcomes and reducing maternal anaemia in pregnancy. Iron tablets, and iron plus folic acid fixed dose combination tablets are also used as nutritional supplementation for prevention and/or treatment of iron and folic acid deficiencies in the general population. UNICEF specifically targets pregnant and lactating women as they are at risk of developing anaemia.

**Safety issues**
Large amounts of iron can be harmful. It is known that accidental iron overdose is a leading cause of child poisoning, and accidental consumption of a dose of 200mg of elemental iron or more has caused fatal iron toxicity in children\(^1\). Safety measures that can reduce the risk of iron overdose in children include:
- blister packaging or a secure lid such as a child-proof lock on the bottle packs;
- keeping the iron supplements out of reach of children.

**Challenges**
The former packaging of 1000 tablets required the product to be repackaged at the time of dispensing by counting the appropriate number of pills and placing them into plastic or paper bags. This poses several risks and challenges, including poor hygiene, loss of identification and traceability, perception of a low-value product, quality of storage and easy access to children.

To ease dispensing at health care facilities, and improve consumer protection and demand, the pack size has been reduced from packs of 1000 tablets to packs of 100 tablets.

**Replacements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD</th>
<th>NEW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1550000</td>
<td>Ferrous salt 60mg iron tabs/PAC-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1550025</td>
<td>Fe(as fum.)+folic 60+0.4mg tab/PAC-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1550010</td>
<td>Iron 60mg tab/PAC-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>S1550030*</td>
<td>Iron 60mg + Folic ac. 400mcg tab/PAC-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>S0000212*</td>
<td>Iron 60mg + Folic acid 400mcg tab/PAC-10x10</td>
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\(^*\) Iron & folic acid fixed dose combination tablets are available in bottle packs of 100 or in blister packs of 10 blisters each with 10 tablets.

For more and technical information on the items please refer to the UNICEF Supply catalogue 
https://supply.unicef.org/

References
Information is based on the WHO guideline: Daily iron and folic acid supplementation in pregnant women. Geneva, World Health Organization; 2012
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/micronutrients/guidelines/daily_ifa_supp_pregnant_women/en/

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