

17.01. Importing items

You can import a tab-delimited text file of items by choosing **File > Import > Import items....**

- This command only imports (creates) items. You will need to do this when you are configuring mSupply for the first time, or when you are wanting to create a number of new items to your system.
- **This process does not introduce stock.**
- If you would like to import stock, see the [17.02. Importing stock](#) page.

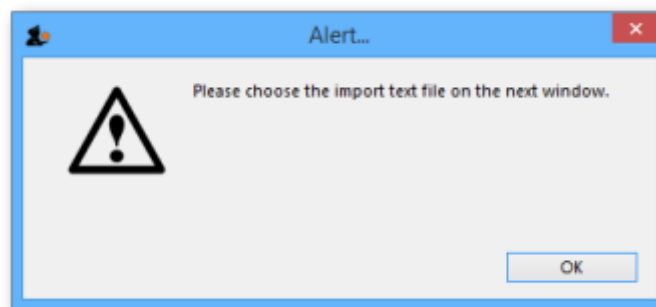


While it is possible to create items and import (introduce) stock at the same time using [Importing items & stock](#), these are logically quite separate activities and we recommend that you keep them separate - you can import much more information about items if you do it separately.

During import you can specify a number of things including:

- What happens with duplicates
- Which [master lists](#) the new items will be added to.
- Which stores the new items will be visible in (if [master lists](#) aren't controlling visibility)

After selecting the menu item you are shown a message asking you to select the file to be imported on the next window:



After clicking OK, a window opens allowing you to select the file to import. After selecting it (by double clicking on the file in the window or clicking on it and clicking on the *Open* button) this window is displayed:

First line contains column headers: If you have used the first line of your import file for column headers, check this box. Then mSupply will ignore the first row in the file, and start importing items from the second row.

Remove quote characters on import: If this is checked then double quote characters (") are removed from item names as they are imported. This is useful if you have exported the import file from spreadsheet software and it has placed double quote characters around the text.



If you have used double characters in item names (e.g. as a symbol for inches) then they will also be removed if this option is checked.

Handling duplicate items: During the import process, mSupply compares the item code in the import file (1st column - see below) against the codes of items already in its database to determine whether an entry is a duplicate item or not. If a duplicate item is found in the import file mSupply will handle it according to your radio button selection in the *If duplicate codes are selected* section:

- **Create new duplicate items and continue** and **Ask each time** radio option is disabled for Item Import.



As of v5 (or earlier) it should not be possible to create an item with the same code as another item. Hence, item with duplicate Item code will be ignored.

- **Skip the duplicate without asking:** the duplicate is ignored and not imported.
- **Stop the import:** if a duplicate is detected mSupply will stop and cancel the whole import i.e. the database will be exactly that same as it was before you started the import.
- **Update the existing item:** the item with the same code already in mSupply will be updated with all the details of the item in the import file.

Preview tab

☐ First line contains column headers

☐ Remove quote characters on import

If duplicate codes are detected

☐ Create new duplicate items and continue

☐ Ask each time

☒ Skip the duplicate without asking

☐ Stop the import

☐ Update the existing item

We recommend you have an up-to-date backup of your data file before attempting import. Click the cancel button below if you are not sure.

PreviewStoresMaster lists

PreviousNext

Record number 1

Field	Value
Code	Item Code
Item Name	Item Name
Units	Units
Reference pack	Reference Pack Size
Shelf loc	Shelf Location key
user_field_1	User field 1
user_field_2	User field 2
user_field_3	User field 3
user_field_4	User field 4
EDL	Essential Drug List
ATC category	ATC Category
DDD value	DDD Value
DDD factor	DDD Factor
Description	Item Description
Department	Department
Stock account	Stock Account Code
COGS account	Purchases Account Code
Terms account	Terms Account Code

Cancel

Import now

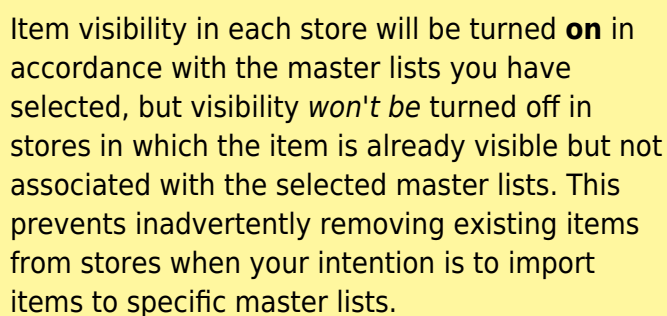
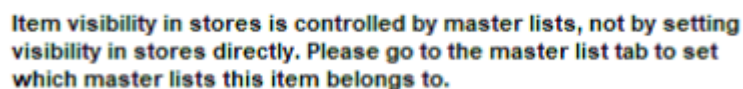
This tab enables you to see a preview of what will be imported into mSupply and helps you check that mSupply is reading what you expect from the import file.

The left hand column of the table (“Field”) shows you all the fields mSupply is expecting to see (in that order, first at the top, last at the bottom of the table). The right hand column (“Value”) shows you the value that mSupply has read from the file for that field. Use the *Next* and *Previous* buttons to move between the records in the import file.

Stores tab



If the preference *Automatically update item visibility in all stores to match master lists used by that store* (see [Preferences > Item](#)) is checked, then item visibility is controlled by [master lists](#) and you do not have the option of selecting stores in which the item is visible. The table on this tab will be replaced with this message telling you to use the Master lists tab instead:



HOW

- This is the tab you use to specify which stores the items you import will be visible in.
- The store you are logged into is ticked by default. Simply check the “Visibility” column checkbox for the stores you wish all imported items to be visible in.

Only imported item visibility is affected during the import. If a duplicate item is found in the import file then:



- If you choose to ignore duplicates, then the visibility of the item already in mSupply is not affected by the import process.
- If you chose to update duplicates, then the visibility of the item already in mSupply will be updated to match what you have set on this tab.

Master lists tab

Import preview

☐ First line contains column headers
 ☐ Remove quote characters on import

If duplicate codes are detected

☐ Create new duplicate items and continue
 ☐ Ask each time
 ☒ Skip the duplicate without asking
 ☐ Stop the import
 ☐ Update the existing item

We recommend you have an up-to-date backup of your data file before attempting import. Click the cancel button below if you are not sure.

PreviewStoresMaster lists

Select the master lists to add the item to

AllNone☐

Master list	Add to list
TestMaster: Duplicate Import	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: New Import	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: No Data Import	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 1 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 2 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 3 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 4 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 5 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 6 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 7 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 8 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 9 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 10 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 11 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 12 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 13 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 14 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 15 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 16 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 17 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 18 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 19 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 20 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 21 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 22 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 23 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 24 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 25 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 26 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 27 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 28 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 29 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 30 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 31 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 32 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 33 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 34 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 35 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 36 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 37 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 38 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 39 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 40 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 41 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 42 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 43 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 44 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 45 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 46 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 47 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 48 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 49 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 50 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 51 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 52 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 53 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 54 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 55 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 56 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 57 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 58 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 59 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 60 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 61 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 62 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 63 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 64 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 65 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 66 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 67 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 68 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TestMaster: Test 71 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TestMaster: Test 75 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TestMaster: Test 80 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 81 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 82 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 83 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 84 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 85 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 86 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 87 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 88 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 89 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 90 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 91 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 92 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 93 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 94 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 95 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 96 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 97 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 98 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 99 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>
TestMaster: Test 100 - Importing	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cancel

Import now

This is the tab you use to determine which master lists the items in the import file will be added to as they are imported. Simply check the “Add to list” column checkbox for the master lists you wish all the items in the import file to be added to.

Any master lists that have the “Automatically add new items to this master list” option checked will have their “Add to list” checkbox checked by default on this tab and you will not be able to uncheck them.

Note that only imported items will be added to the master lists selected. This means that items already in mSupply which match duplicates in the import file that you choose to ignore will not be

added to the selected master lists. Similarly, items already in mSupply which are updated because they match duplicates in the import file and the "Update the existing item" option was chosen are added to the selected master lists. And don't worry, if an item is already on a msster list it won't be added again.

Import file format

Field order for the text file:

Column number	Column letter	Field	Description
1	A	item code	18 alphanumeric characters (must be a unique value)
2	B	item name	80 alphanumeric characters
3	C	units	3 alphanumeric characters recommended (ea, ml or mg). Entries in the units list will be created if you import a unit that does not already exist in the data file. 60 characters supported
4	D	reference pack size	integer
The above fields are mandatory, while the following fields are optional and may or may not be included as per your requirements			
5	E	shelf location	60 alphanumeric characters
6	F	user field 1	30 alphanumeric characters
7	G	user field 2	30 alphanumeric characters
8	H	user field 3	30 alphanumeric characters
9	I	user field 4	"true" or "false"
10	J	edl	"true" or "false"
11	K	ATC category	30 alphanumeric characters
12	L	ddd value	8 alphanumeric characters- the ddd and its units
13	M	ddd factor	number greater than zero (default=1)
14	N	item description	The long description for the item. Do not include carriage returns (new lines made with the return or enter key) in your text file.
15	O	item department	The name of the department that the item belongs to. If the department does not exist, mSupply will create it.
16	P	account code for stock	The account code used for stock purchases . Note that these accounts will be created if they don't exist.
17	Q	account code for cost of goods sold	
18	R	income account code	
19	S	Default sell price	

Column number	Column letter	Field	Description
20	T	Category	Category 1. This category is hierarchical and has 3 levels. You can enter different levels separated by :: (for example "Pharmaceuticals::Controlled::Anti-depressants" or "Controlled::Anti-depressants") or just the lowest level with no separator (for example "Anti-depressants"). mSupply will look for an existing category with the levels you define, if it doesn't find one then it will create it and assign the category to the name. If you enter only the lowest level category (for example "Anti-depressants"), mSupply will look for any lowest level category "Anti-depressants" with any or no parent. If it finds one, it will assign the first one it finds to the name being imported, otherwise it will create it with no parent and assign it to the name. We strongly recommend you use the WHO EDL categories for this field
21	U	Category 2	60 alphanumeric characters
22	V	Category 3	60 alphanumeric characters
23	W	VEN category	The WHO VEN category of the item. One character only, must be V, E or N, will be ignored if it is neither of these.
23	X	Weight	
24	Y	Critical stock	"true" or "false"
25	Z	Normal stock	"true" or "false"
26	AA	User field 5	number
27	AB	User field 6	30 alphanumeric characters
28	AC	User field 7	"true" or "false"

All these are in this handy template:

mSupply_item_import_template.xlsx

The chances are that you already have a set of codes that you use internally. In this case open up Excel or a similar spreadsheet program, fill in the item description in the order shown above. For a quick solution, you only need to take account of the first four columns, the rest can be ignored.

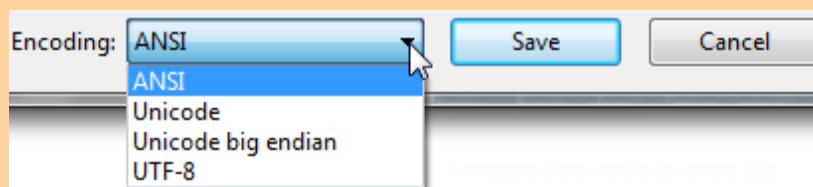
The third column representing "Units", can be left blank, however, it is better to fill this in. The fourth column "*reference pack size*" can be set to "1" for all rows unless you know what pack size you want to use as the "standard" (Don't worry about this. The reference pack is used for comparing quotations. You can receive and issue any pack size you like).

	A	B	C	D
1	Item code	item name	units	Reference pack size
2	ace250t	Acetazolamicea		1
3	ace100t	Acetylsalicylicea		1
4	ace300t	Acetylsalicylicea		1
5	aci200t	Acidovir 200rea		1
6	aci250t	Acidovir sodiiea		1
7	alb400t	Albendazole ea		1
8	alb25i	Albumin, hurea		1
9	abl5i	Albumin, hurea		1
10	alci10	Alcuronium clea		1
11	all100t	Allopurinol 10ea		1
12	alu13s	Aluminium diea		1

Save a spreadsheet file as shown above as a **tab-delimited text file**, and then import it as described at the top of this page.



If the file you are importing has non-English characters (for example, accents), it is important to make sure the file is saved with a UTF-8 charset. You can check this by opening the file in Notepad (for Windows). When you save the file, you can choose the Charset used, as shown in image below.



If there are non-printable characters before or after the item name and code they will be removed. Any non-printable characters in the name or code will be replaced with an underscore (_).

Import new item codes

If you need to change the item codes for some or all of your items in bulk, custom code has been developed for this purpose. It is a technically challenging process that is easy to get wrong. Please contact Sustainable Solutions on support@msupply.org.nz to discuss this. Include a link to this

heading [Import new item codes](#) .



The relevant details are:

- Method: `importCsvToUpdateItemCode`
- [mSupply Github issue 9130](#)

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