



Critical Drug Shortage

Sodium Bicarbonate for Injection All Products

The issue: Nationwide shortage of sodium bicarbonate for injection due to manufacturing issues with single provider Pfizer. All strengths (4.2%, 7.5% and 8.4%), all formats (vials and prefilled syringes) and all sizes (10 and 50 mL) are affected! The availability date is unknown at this time.

NH stock status and plan: NH has approximately one month of stock on hand based on current utilization rates. All provincial Health Authorities are working to reduce demand on existing stock where possible, are removing stock from locations where it is not needed, and are working with Health Canada to identify an alternative source if possible.

Practice Implications*: Please ensure that the existing stock is reserved for critical care cases, maintaining existing crash carts and used as effectively as possible! Some conservation suggestions are:

Indication	Recommendation*	Key Points
"Buffering" lidocaine to decrease injection pain	Do not use. Inject slowly and with a fine needle instead.	Not an essential use
Urinary alkalization to enhance drug elimination (e.g. overdoses)	Contact BC DPIC (1-800-567-8911) for assistance ; sodium acetate may be an appropriate substitute	Evidence to support use of sodium bicarbonate is limited for most agents
Diabetic ketoacidosis	Sodium bicarbonate is not recommended	Treat underlying ketogenesis
Hyperkalemia (acute management)	Insulin regular 10 units IV with 50% dextrose 50 mL IV +/- inhaled beta-2 agonists	Sodium bicarbonate therapy has little use in routine treatment of hyperkalemia unless severe metabolic acidosis is present.

References: Society of Critical Care Medicine Drug Shortages Alert – September 2016
<http://www.learnicu.org/Lists/Web%20Contents/Attachments/14258/Drug-Shortages-Alert-9-16.pdf>
 American Society of Hospital Pharmacy Drug Shortage Alert – May 26, 2017
<https://www.ashp.org/Drug-Shortages/Current-Shortages/Drug-Shortage-Detail.aspx?id=788#>

*Alternates are provided for clinical information and may not be relevant in all clinical situations

Date: June 13, 2017

Drug Discontinuation	
Medication Change	
Recall	
Drug Shortage	✓
Formulary Changes	

For the information of:
physicians, nurses,
pharmacists

For further information
please contact:
Gordon Harper
Medication Use
Management Pharmacist
(778-349-3216)
Nancy Dyck
Medication Use
Management Pharmacist
(250-261-7555) or
mumpharmacist@
northernhealth.ca

PLEASE POST



northern health
the northern way of caring