NSW Health

Ongoing disruption to the supply of multiple intravenous fluid bags

SAFETY NOTICE 014/24

Issue date:	26 June 2024
Content reviewed by:	Medication Safety Expert Advisory Committee Medication Shortage Assessment and Management team Infection Prevention and Control
Distributed to:	Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance; Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit
KEY MESSAGE:	NSW Health facilities are aware of the ongoing disruption to the supply of multiple intravenous fluid bags and proposed mitigation strategies.
ACTION REQUIRED BY:	Chief Executives, Directors of Clinical Governance
REQUIRED ACTION:	1. Distribute this Safety Notice to all relevant clinicians and clinical departments where intravenous fluids are held, prescribed, and/or administered, and include this Safety Notice in relevant handovers and safety huddles. 2. Undertake a local risk assessment and incorporate the below recommendations to manage the disruption of supply of intravenous fluids. 3. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken in response to this Safety Notice. 4. Confirm receipt and distribution of this Safety Notice within **72 hours** to: CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au.
DEADLINE:	COB 1 July 2024
We recommend you also inform:	Directors, Managers and Staff of: • All clinical areas • Pharmacy • Nursing/Midwifery • Medical Services • Drug and Therapeutics Committees Clinical Product Managers Infection Prevention and Control Other relevant clinicians, departments and committees.
Website:	https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html
Review date:	May 2025

Made obsolete 16 July 2024 - Replaced by SA:011/24

Contact: Clinical Excellence Commission
02 9269 5500
CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au

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SN:014/24

Situation

There is an ongoing disruption to the supply with intermittent stock available of intravenous fluid bags due to manufacturing issues and increases in demand. The date of return to normal supply is variable for each brand, product and volume.

Products affected include:

- Glucose 5% bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Frensenius Kabi) – all volumes.
- Hartmann's solution bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Frensenius Kabi) – all volumes.
- Sodium chloride 0.9% bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Frensenius Kabi) – all volumes.
- Water for injection bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Frensenius Kabi) – all volumes.

This Safety Notice replaces SN:008/24 – Disruption to supply – Sodium chloride 0.9% 100 mL intravenous solution, which has now been rescinded.

Background

Intravenous fluid bags are used to manage or correct deficiencies in hydration and electrolyte imbalance. They are also used as diluents for compatible intravenous medicines.

Assessment

If the preferred intravenous fluid bag (diluent and/or volume) is not available due to a disruption to supply, alternative products will need to be used considering clinical appropriateness and compatibility.

Recommendations

- A facility-wide review of intravenous fluid bag stock holding should be conducted, ensuring all locations of stock are identified.
    - Identify all excess stock in wards/clinical areas and consider sharing of stock between units within each facility.
    - A reduction of minimum/maximum quantities held in imprest areas should be enacted with stock management throughout the disruption to supply.
- Where appropriate, rather than using an intravenous infusion bag, consider:
    - alternative intravenous administration practices (for example, an intravenous bolus injection where appropriate, or administration via syringe driver) – refer to the Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook for advice
    - fluid replacement via the oral route of administration
    - medicine administration via alternate routes of administration such as oral, subcutaneous and intramuscular.
- Review patients currently receiving intravenous infusions and consider switching to alternative routes of administration where appropriate.
- Ensure clinicians are aware that fluids marketed for irrigation are **unsuitable** for injection or infusion.
- Ensure that the management and administration of all intravenous fluids are in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive *Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings* (PD2023_025).

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- When administering medicines via the intravenous route, refer to the Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook to ensure compatibility of the medicine with the selected diluent and that the final concentration is within the acceptable range for administration/stability.
- Be aware that some medicines (for example, ciclosporin, tacrolimus and diazepam) are incompatible with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and some of the intravenous fluid bags may not be appropriate for administration of these medicines. Refer to the Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook for further information.
- Liaise with preferred wholesalers/suppliers, and where required, ensure back orders for intravenous fluid bags based on average usage are placed to ensure adequate distribution of stock when it becomes available.
- The features of intravenous fluid bags (including overfill and maximum volume that can be added) and a comparison of constituents is available in the Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook.
- Escalate any concerns regarding this disruption or issues obtaining supply to CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au.

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