



## Safety Notice 004/13

### SODIUM BICARBONATE INTRAVENOUS INFUSION BP 8.4% 100ml shortage

4 September 2013

#### Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

#### Action required by:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

#### We recommend you also inform:

- Emergency Departments
- Intensive Care Units
- Cancer Care Units
- Cardiothoracic Services
- Directors of Pharmacy
- Drugs and Therapeutic Committees
- Directors of Nursing

#### Expert Reference Group

##### Content reviewed by:

- Business Procurement Services, HealthShare
- Pharmaceutical Services Unit, NSW Ministry of Health
- Office of the Chief Health Officer

#### Clinical Excellence Commission

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Intranet Website  
<http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/>

#### Background

**SODIUM BICARBONATE INTRAVENOUS INFUSION BP 8.4% 100ml** (Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd) will be unavailable from Pfizer from early September.

The only alternate supply of sodium bicarbonate 8.4% immediately available is a 10ml vial (Phebra Pty Limited).

Sodium Bicarbonate Injection 8.4% 50ml prefilled Min-I-Jet syringe (UCB Pharma) is also unavailable.

Sodium bicarbonate is used as an alkalinising agent in the treatment of metabolic acidosis which may occur in many clinical conditions or for urinary alkalinisation in the treatment of certain intoxications and in methotrexate therapy. As intravenous sodium bicarbonate is indicated in medically critical situations, often requiring the use of 1mmol/kg (1mL/kg of an 8.4% sodium bicarbonate solution), use of multiple 10ml vials (e.g. to administer 70 to 80mL for a 70 to 80kg adult) may be impractical in emergency situations and could introduce patient safety risks.

The time to treatment in emergency situations is critical and staff work under stressful circumstances. The use of multiple vials may delay treatment and increase the opportunity for error.

Alternative supply options of local and Special Access Scheme (SAS) products in 50 and 100ml vials are being investigated, details of which can be obtained by emailing [contract902@hss.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:contract902@hss.health.nsw.gov.au)

In the interim the following measures should be put into place.

#### Local Health Districts / Networks Should

1. Distribute this notice and its attachment to key stakeholders and all clinical departments.
2. Assess the current status of sodium bicarbonate injection availability in each facility, ensuring all locations of stock are identified including resuscitation trolleys and disaster stores.
3. Develop a local plan to manage the supply shortage, making every effort to reserve available supplies of the 100ml vial for critical situations and make arrangements to obtain alternative stock.
4. Make clinicians aware of the presence and appearance of the alternate 10ml vial of sodium bicarbonate 8.4% injection and ensure it is stored appropriately to reduce any look-alike errors.
5. Inform clinical department heads of the need to review protocols specific to their clinical practice and produce advice on safe ways of administering sodium bicarbonate injection where multiple 10ml vials are required.
6. Once alternative supplies are available, that the most appropriate sized product is stocked in each clinical unit for the conditions treated.

#### Further information

The shortage of **SODIUM BICARBONATE INTRAVENOUS INFUSION BP 8.4% 100ml** is expected to last three months and may extend to March 2014.

Attached are photos of the 100ml vial in short supply and the available 10ml vial of sodium bicarbonate 8.4%.

#### Suggested actions by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Forward information to appropriate area for action.
2. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken.

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SODIUM BICARBONATE INTRAVENOUS  
INFUSION BP 8.4% 100ml (Pfizer)



Sodium Bicarbonate 8.4% Injection  
840mg in 10ml (Phebra)