



State of New Hampshire

Department of Safety

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New Hampshire EMS Information Bulletin 20

DATE: January 31, 2014
SUBJECT: Normal Saline Shortage
TO: New Hampshire EMS Providers, Medical Directors, EMS Unit Leaders, and EMS Hospital Coordinators
FROM: Tom D'Aprix, MD - State EMS Medical Director

We have received notification that some areas in NH are experiencing shortages of 0.9% Sodium Chloride (Normal Saline). This trend reflects a national shortage as well. Please see the attached fact sheet from the Emergency Nurses Association

Until Normal Saline returns to its usual availability, the NH Bureau of EMS endorses the following:

- With the **exceptions** listed below, Lactated Ringers can be used as a direct substitute with Normal Saline.
- **Exceptions** – there is either **no data**, or, **clear evidence** of incompatibility between Normal Saline and the following agents; they should **NOT** be combined.
 - Amiodarone
 - Atropine
 - Diltiazem
 - Fentanyl
 - Ganisetron
 - Ondaneston
 - Metoprolol
 - Midazolam
 - Nalonone
 - Vasopressin

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ENA Statement on the Shortage of IV Saline Solution

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is closely tracking reports from hospitals across the country of a shortage of IV saline solution. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the drug manufacturers, the increased demand from a harsh flu season and temporary shutdowns at some manufacturing plants are the cause of the shortage.

The FDA is aware of the problem and is working with the three U.S. manufacturers of IV saline solution - Baxter, Braun Medical and Hospira - to increase the supply of this product. It is also looking at alternative sources, including importation from overseas.

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists has stated that suppliers are now operating at full production capacity in an attempt to meet the increased demand.

In a January 17 letter to customers, Baxter said they “anticipate gradual improvement in the weeks ahead and are confident that these steps will enable us to achieve expected service levels.” Baxter also stated they are manufacturing a greater amount of IV solutions than in previous years and are taking steps to further increase capacity in 2014.

ENA is monitoring the situation closely and communicating information we receive regarding the shortage of IV saline solution to the FDA.

In addition, ENA is working closely with other national healthcare organizations to ensure that the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA), which was signed into law on July 9, 2012, is fully implemented so it provides the FDA with the tools to minimize future shortages of drugs or biological products.

The key provisions of FDASIA dealing with shortages include:

- Broadening the scope of the early notification requirements by requiring manufacturers to notify the FDA of potential drug discontinuances; and
- Clarifying that the notification requirement applies to drugs that are used in **emergency medical care** or during surgery.

For more information on drug shortages and the FDA’s efforts to alleviate the shortage of IV saline solution, please visit: <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/drugsafety/DrugShortages/default.htm>.