



# Safety Alert 003/16

## Intravenous Metronidazole - Disruption to supply

**9 December 2016**

### Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Director Regulation and Compliance Unit

### Action required by:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

### We recommend you also inform:

- Emergency Departments
- Intensive Care Units
- Infectious Diseases Physicians
- Directors of Surgery
- Directors of Medical Services
- Directors of Nursing
- Directors of Pharmacy

### Deadline for completion of action

**13 December 2016**

### Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:

- Office of the Chief Health Officer
- Chief Pharmacist Unit
- Clinical Excellence Commission
- HealthShare
- AMS Expert Advisory Committee

### Clinical Excellence Commission

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### Review date

June 2017

### Background

All Australian suppliers have depleted stocks of metronidazole intravenous infusion preparations. A previous communication regarding the shortage was sent on 2 December 2016. As there has been a delay in expected return to normal stock levels to late December 2016/early January 2017, the communication has been upgraded to a Safety Alert.

Intravenous (IV) metronidazole is used for intra-abdominal sepsis (in combination with other antibiotics) and other serious but common infections requiring anaerobic organism cover.

There is also a shortage of oral metronidazole tablets (200 mg & 400 mg). This has been the result of continued production issues with the generic product, Metrogyl® impacting on supply of other brands.

Flagyl® 400 mg tablets (AUSTR 16074) are available in limited supply. This 400 mg presentation is scored and can be cut in half. Flagyl® oral liquid and suppositories are also available.

IV metronidazole is available via the Special Access Scheme (SAS). Supply of IV metronidazole should be reserved for infective conditions where IV metronidazole is the only available option. Metronidazole oral therapy is an alternative in patients tolerating and absorbing oral medications as oral therapy is as effective as intravenous administration.

### Further information

Refer to the Australian Medicines Handbook and Therapeutic Guidelines (eTG complete) for further advice on precautions associated with alternative antibiotic choices. Both can be accessed from CIAP.

### Actions required by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Distribute this notice to all stakeholders and all clinical departments
2. Assess the current status of metronidazole intravenous infusion preparations available in each facility, ensuring all locations of stock are identified. Provide feedback on stock levels to Clinical Excellence Commission [cec-medicationsafety@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cec-medicationsafety@health.nsw.gov.au) by **COB Tuesday 13 December 2016**.
3. Remove and quarantine stock from clinical areas where metronidazole intravenous infusion preparations are not routinely used.
4. Reserve existing stocks of metronidazole intravenous infusion preparations for infective conditions where IV metronidazole is the only available option.
5. Use oral metronidazole where suitable or alternative antibiotic options during the temporary shortage; please contact your infectious diseases, clinical microbiology or antimicrobial stewardship services.
6. The National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship provides advice on suitable alternatives. Their factsheet is available at: [www.ncas-australia.org/news-and-events](http://www.ncas-australia.org/news-and-events)
7. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken.