

MEDICATION SHORTAGE BULLETIN



Chloroprocaine and Mepivacaine in Canada

August 2024

Background

Chloroprocaine was discontinued from the Canadian market in 2012, as a result of a corporate decision made by its manufacturer (in the context of a shortage of raw materials required to produce it).¹ Chloroprocaine is still manufactured and broadly available in the United States and Europe.² In December 2020, in response to the pandemic, Health Canada allowed the exceptional importation and sale of foreign-authorized chloroprocaine.³ The allowance for access to foreign-authorized chloroprocaine eventually expired, as this was a pandemic-related authorization.

Current situation

In May 2024, a shortage of mepivacaine was reported to Health Canada by its manufacturer.⁴ In the absence of an available foreign-authorized supply of mepivacaine, Health Canada has allowed the exceptional importation and sale of US-authorized chloroprocaine to provide Canadians with an alternate short-acting local anesthetic. This importation and access to chloroprocaine will be of limited duration, until the mepivacaine shortage is resolved.

Future outlook

Health Canada is astutely aware of many Canadian anesthesiologists' desire to have consistent, long-term access to chloroprocaine and has encouraged companies to submit applications through its normal route of entry to the Canadian pharmaceutical market. However, Health Canada cannot compel a company to market and supply a product. A full review of chloroprocaine for spinal and epidural use has been carried out by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health (CADTH).⁵ CAS remains in close contact with Health Canada and will keep our members posted on this evolving situation.

References

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