



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEDICINES SHORTAGE ADVISORY GROUP WALES

MEDICINE SHORTAGE

Distribution:	As Annex 1
From:	Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Date:	5 July 2019
Reference:	CPhO/MedsLet/2019/07
Category:	Level 3 - High impact
Title:	Disruption to supply of Marcain Heavy 0.5% Solution for Injection.
For Action by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hospital Chief Pharmacists in the NHS and independent sector - Action as belowMedical Directors of Health Boards - disseminate to relevant clinicians in secondary care setting.
Timeframe:	Action within 24 hrs
For Information:	See Annex 1 – Distribution List
<p>Key Recipients:</p> <p>Hospitals in the independent sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hospital pharmaciesHospital pharmacistsAnaesthesia, directors ofAnaesthetic medical staffAnaesthetic nursing staffAnaesthetistsObstetriciansObstetrics and gynaecology departments	



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<https://gov.wales/topics/health/professionals/pharmaceutical/?lang=en>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstetrics and gynaecology directors • Obstetrics departments • Obstetrics nurses • Midwifery departments • Midwifery staff • Maternity units • Theatre managers • Theatre nurses
<p>What is this about:</p> <p>There is a short-term supply issue affecting Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection due to delays at the manufacturing site. Aspen are the sole UK licensed supplier of Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection. Stock is currently unavailable from wholesalers and all remaining stocks are at local Trust level. Further supplies of UK licensed stock are expected by the 22nd July 2019 and we are working with Aspen to try and improve this date.</p>
<p>Issue & Action to be taken:</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Centralise stock of Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection from all clinical areas except obstetrics with support from pharmacy.</p> <p>Local decisions should be made about which clinical areas/specialties can safely use alternatives to Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection on a temporary basis.</p> <p>Existing supplies of Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection should be reserved for clinical areas, particularly obstetrics that cannot safely use an alternative agent, especially in emergency situations.</p> <p>Health Boards who have excess stock are encouraged to share stock with other local hospitals whose immediate needs may be greater.</p> <p>Following centralisation of stock, if any Health Board does not have enough Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection stock to support local use they should place orders for unlicensed supplies, limited amounts of which are available.</p> <p><u>Alternative products</u></p> <p>In order to conserve existing supplies, Health Boards should follow the stock management actions detailed earlier in the alert.</p> <p>Agreed management plans for areas that can use alternative options should be shared with relevant clinical colleagues and take account of whether local clinical training and support is necessary.</p> <p>Health Boards with insufficient stocks locally should consider ordering unlicensed imports. Health Boards are reminded that orders for unlicensed product should only be considered if there is insufficient stock available of licensed Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) solution for injection.</p>

Aspen have identified limited stock from the Swedish and Danish market that can be imported as an unlicensed product. The product is identical to UK licensed Marcain Heavy 0.5% (bupivacaine hydrochloride anhydrous) Solution for Injection and is due to be available in the coming week. Further information about this stock including ordering details will be shared with hospital pharmacy departments in the coming days.

Some of the specialist importer companies have identified stock from other European countries that they are importing as an unlicensed product and should be available for hospitals to order in the coming days.

Pharmacy departments will be familiar with sourcing unlicensed products and “specials” and should be able to advise further. Before prescribing, you should liaise with your pharmacy team to clarify local availability of UK licensed product.

When prescribing and dispensing unlicensed preparations, prescribers and pharmacists should always ensure the following:

Use of unlicensed products should be in line with agreed local policies and guidance.

Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must take into account the relevant GMC guidance and local governance procedures. Please see link to GMC guidance:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/prescribing-and-managing-medicines-and-devices/prescribing-unlicensed-medicines>

Please forward to listed recipients.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Evans

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer/Prif Swyddog Fferyllol
Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru

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