

# Help Keep Patients Safe as Drug Shortages Worsen

You'll see **more focus on managing drug shortages**...partly due to a tornado hitting a Pfizer facility in late July. Plus the number of drug shortages is higher than it's been in nearly 10 years...with many hospitals experiencing critical shortages of chemo meds that are affecting patient care.

Help keep patients safe as shortages worsen...and resolve.

Expect the Pfizer plant damage to impact mostly anesthesia meds (midazolam, rocuronium, etc) and opioids (fentanyl, morphine, etc).

And don't be surprised if it exacerbates shortages you've been experiencing...where mitigation strategies are already be in place.

For example, injectable lidocaine has been short for months...so clinicians may be using alternatives whenever possible.

Continue to stay on top of details...such as by attending daily huddles, checking email, etc. A leader or team will have oversight...and plans can change quickly.

And you may need to play an active role, such as if FDA extends the expiration date for a med to help ease a shortage.

Watch for issues with alternative products that could compromise safety...and alert your admin or med safety officer ASAP.

For instance, there have been allowances for production of neuromuscular blockers without warnings on vial caps...and injectable concentrated potassium chloride without black markings required in the US for safety.

Help communicate important info about practice or product changes to nurse colleagues...to limit confusion or mishaps.

For example, stocking a different concentration of an injectable opioid (hydromorphone, etc) in automated dispensing cabinets may increase the risk for incorrect dosing.

Don't hoard meds...in your pharmacy or in specific areas or satellites. This can cause artificial shortages...keeping meds from patients who need them.

Plus manufacturers may not allow ordering more than your usual amount as another measure to safeguard against hoarding.

Get our resource, *Managing Drug Shortages*, to brush up on more strategies.

## Key References:

-<https://www.npr.org/2023/07/26/1190327560/here-are-the-drugs-that-could-be-in-short-supply-after-a-tornado-hit-a-pfizer-fa>. (Accessed August 3, 2023).

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