

TAXOL® (Paclitaxel Injection)

The major source of Taxol® is Ben Venue Laboratories (BVL) in the United States. Quality assurance problems in the sterilization process were identified on inspection in November 2011 resulting in intermittent shortages of the drug anticipated to last until 2013¹.

Paclitaxel is available in Canada direct from Hospira, but it may be on allocation²:

- Paclitaxel 30mg/5ml (substituted with Taxol); next availability TBD
- Paclitaxel 100mg/ 16.7ml (substituted with Taxol); next availability TBD
- Paclitaxel 300mg/ 50ml; available, but may be on allocation

Since supply may be limited, it would be prudent to follow basic drug shortage guidelines:

- Existing Paclitaxel stock only used to continue treatments that have already been initiated.
- No new patients should be initiated on Paclitaxel treatment, until further notice.

Indications³

- TAXOL® (paclitaxel) is indicated, alone or in combination, for the treatment of carcinoma of the ovary, breast, lung or AIDS-related Kaposi's Sarcoma.

Treatment Alternative¹

- No single agent can be substituted for Daunorubicin
- An alternate agent based on a patient's renal and liver function, and the neoplasm type and location must be chosen
- A hematology or oncology specialist consult may be appropriate

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References:

1. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Drug Shortages. Available at <http://www.ashp.org/DrugShortages/Current/Bulletin.aspx?id=790>. August 2012.
2. Personal communication, Hospira Pharmaceuticals, 1-866-488-6088
3. E-CPS [online]. Taxol monograph. Accessed August 23, 2012