

THYROGEN® (thyrotropin alfa for injection)

The shortage of Thyrogen® is due to unexpected delays in the release of three thyrotropin alfa lots.¹ The manufacturer, Genzyme Canada Inc, expects to have Thyrogen® back in full supply by 2013.² In the meantime, Thyrogen® will be intermittently on backorder.

Genzyme advises health care providers not to schedule any new Thyrogen® treatments until they have secured product.³

Indications⁴

- Adjunctive treatment as pre-therapeutic stimulation for radioiodine ablation of thyroid tissue remnants in patients maintained on thyroid hormone suppression therapy who have undergone a near-total or total thyroidectomy for well-differentiated thyroid cancer without evidence of distant metastatic thyroid cancer.
- Adjunctive diagnostic tool for serum thyroglobulin (Tg) testing, with or without radioiodine imaging, in the follow-up of patients with well-differentiated thyroid cancer.

Treatment Alternative

- Withdrawal of thyroid hormone treatment, typically for 4 to 5 week. Liothyronine (T3) may be used in doses up to 25 µg two times per day to minimize symptoms of hypothyroidism (lower doses for elderly, ischemic heart disease). Stop liothyronine at least 2 weeks prior to radioiodine dosing.⁵

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References:

1. American Society of Health System Pharmacists. Drug Shortages. Thyrotropin Apha. Available at <http://www.ashp.org/DrugShortages/Current/Bulletin.aspx?id=699>. Accessed July 2012.
2. Personal communication Genzyme Canada Medical Information, July 2012 – Telephone 1-800-745-4447.

3. Genzyme update on supply of Thyrogen® (thyrotropin alfa for injection). May 21, 2012. Available at <http://www.thyrogen.com/pdfs/supplyupdate-2011.pdf>. Accessed July 2012.
4. e-CPS [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Canadian Pharmacists Association; c2012. Thyrogen [product monograph]. Available from: <http://www.e-cps.ca>. Accessed July 2012.
5. Sherman S. Neoplasms of the thyroid. In Holland-Frei Cancer Medicine, 2010. STAT!Ref Medical Reference Library. Available at www.statref.com by subscription. Accessed July 2012.