



VITALS

For Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Nationwide Recall of Pre-filled Heparin & Saline Lock Flush Solution

AM2, Pat, Inc. has expanded its original recall of Lot # 070926H pre-filled heparin flush solutions to include all heparin and saline flush syringes it makes. The syringes have a variety of labels, which may include: Am2Pat, Sierra Pre-filled, or B. Braun. They will have the National Drug Code (NDC) prefix 64054. Note that these syringes have been sold to in-patient and out-patient facilities, as well as to patients by home-care companies.



Use of these products should be stopped immediately because the CDC has confirmed the growth of *Serratia marcescens* from unopened syringes. "This type of bacterial infection could present a serious adverse health consequence that could lead to life-threatening injuries and/or death."

S. marcescens likes to grow in damp places, like tile grout in bathrooms, but is also found in supposedly "sterile" places and the subgingival biofilm on teeth. It is a common cause of respiratory and urinary tract infections in adults, as well as, GI system infections in children. *Serratia* may also cause conjunctivitis, keratitis, endophthalmitis, and tear duct infections. It may also be resistant to several antibiotics.

At least 40 people in Illinois and Texas have become ill from the contamination. Those who were hospitalized were in from five to nine days. About five lawsuits have been filed.

Don't you wonder if the use of good hand-washing techniques could have prevented this? Some hospitals now put up signs in patient rooms asking patients to remind doctors and nurses to wash their hands before touching them. My grand-daughter was having a minor surgical procedure in a highly respected tertiary care center where her mom works, and a pre-op nurse was going to try to start an IV without washing her hands or wearing gloves.

On January 25, Baxter International Inc. issued an urgent recall for nine lots of Heparin 1,000 Units/ml 10ml and 30ml Multi-Dose Vials. Those of you who do critical care transfers might keep this in mind. "Adverse patient reactions have included: stomach pain or discomfort, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, decreased or low blood pressure, chest pain, fast heart rate, dizziness, fainting, unresponsiveness, shortness of breath, feeling your heart beat strong or fast, drug ineffectiveness, burning sensation, redness or paleness of skin, abnormal sensation of the skin, mouth or lips, flushing, increased sweating, decreased skin sensitivity, headache, feeling unwell, restlessness, watery eyes, throat swelling, thirst and difficulty opening the mouth." Some of the patients involved experienced severe or life-threatening reactions. See www.recalls.gov/medicine.html for more information.

Erratum: Correction from last week's Vital Newsletter, Joe Zingale's correct email address is: jzingale1@bellsouth.net

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