

College of Emergency Medicine and National Poisons Information Service
Guideline on Antidote Availability for Emergency Departments (December 2013)
Appendix 1. Stock levels & storage recommendations

Doses and Clinical Advice on the Administration of Antidotes

TOXBASE and/or the BNF should be consulted for further advice on doses and indications for antidote administration. If necessary, the National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) should be telephoned for more patient-specific advice. Contact details for NPIS are available on TOXBASE.

Stock Levels

The recommended minimum stocking levels (rounded up to full “pack-sizes” where necessary) are based on the amount of antidote required to initiate treatment for an adult patient in the ED and to continue treatment for the first 24 hours.

Higher stock levels may be required and individual departments should determine the amount of each antidote they stock based on the epidemiology of poisoning presentations to their department.

Additional drugs that are used in the poisoned patient that are widely available in ED are not listed in the table – in particular it is important to ensure that insulin, benzodiazepines (diazepam and/or lorazepam) and magnesium are immediately available in the ED.

The following drugs should be immediately available in the ED or any area where poisoned patients are initially treated
These drugs should be held in a designated storage facility

Drug	Indication	Presentation	Recommended stock	Special storage conditions
Acetylcysteine	Paracetamol	200mg/mL, 10mL ampoule	20 ampoules	
Activated charcoal	Many oral poisons	50g pack	7 packs	
Atropine	Bradycardia Organophosphorus or carbamate insecticides	600mcg/mL, 1mL ampoule	10 ampoules ¹	
Calcium chloride	Calcium channel blockers Systemic effects of hydrofluoric acid	10mL ampoule	6 ampoules	
Calcium gluconate	Local infiltration for hydrofluoric acid	10mL ampoule	10 ampoules	
Calcium gluconate gel	Hydrofluoric acid	25g pack	1 pack	
Dicobalt edetate	Cyanide	15mg/mL, 20mL ampoule	6 ampoules	
Hydroxocobalamin (<i>Cyanokit</i> ® only suitable product)		5g pack (<i>Cyanokit</i> ®)	2 packs	
Sodium nitrite		3% (30mg/mL), 10mL ampoule	5 ampoules	
Sodium thiosulphate		50% (500mg/mL), 10mL ampoule	5 ampoules	

Drug	Indication	Presentation	Recommended stock	Special storage conditions
Flumazenil	Reversal of iatrogenic over-sedation with benzodiazepines. Use with caution in patients with benzodiazepine poisoning, particularly in mixed drug overdoses; contraindicated in mixed TCA/ benzodiazepine overdose.	100mcg/mL, 5mL ampoule	5 ampoules	
Glucagon	Beta-adrenoreceptor blockers. Other indications e.g. calcium channel blockers, seek NPIS advice	1mg vial	50 vials	Store in fridge (can store at room temperature but reduced shelf life must be marked)
Glyceryl trinitrate OR Isosorbide dinitrate	Hypertension	1mg/mL, 50mL ampoule 1mg/mL (0.1%), 10mL ampoule	6 ampoules 30 ampoules	
Methylthioninium chloride (methylene blue)	Methaemoglobinaemia	0.5% (5mg/mL), 10mL ampoules	5 ampoules	
Naloxone	Opioids	400mcg/1mL, 1mL ampoule	30 ampoules	
Procyclidine injection	Dystonic reactions	5mg/mL, 2mL ampoule	5 ampoules	
Sodium bicarbonate 8.4%	TCAs & class Ia & Ic antiarrhythmic drugs Urinary alkalinisation	200mL polyfusor	3 polyfusors	
Sodium bicarbonate isotonic 1.26% or 1.4%	Urinary alkalinisation	500mL polyfusor	12 polyfusors	
Viper venom antiserum, European	European adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>)	10ml ampoule	2 ampoules	Store in fridge

The following drugs should be available within 1 hour (i.e. within the hospital)

Drug	Indication	Presentation	Recommended stock	Special storage conditions
Calcium folinate	Methotrexate (MTX)	10mg/mL, 30mL ampoule	15 ampoules	Store in fridge and protect from light.
	Methanol, formic acid	10mg/mL, 30mL ampoule	5 ampoules	
Cyproheptadine	Serotonin syndrome	4mg tablet	30 tablets	

Dantrolene	Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS)	20mg vial	48 ampoules	
	Other drug-related hyperpyrexia, seek NPIS advice	20mg vial	36 ampoules	
Desferrioxamine	Iron	500mg vial	40 vials	
Digoxin specific antibody fragments Digifab	Digoxin	40mg vial	10 vials	Store in fridge
Fomepizole OR	Ethylene glycol, methanol	5mg/mL, 20mL ampoule OR 1g/mL, 1.5mL vial	25 ampoules 4 vials	
Ethanol ²	NB. Fomepizole is the antidote of choice	100% ethanol, 5mL ampoule (approx ≈ 4g)	60 ampoules	
Macrogol '3350' (polyethylene glycol) <i>Klean-Prep</i> ®	Gut decontamination for agents not bound by activated charcoal e.g. iron, lithium, bodypackers	4 sachets (reconstituted with 4L water)	12 sachets	
Mesna	Cyclophosphamide	400mg tablet; 1 g/10mL ampoule	Variable, liaise with oncology	
Octreotide	Sulphonylureas	50mcg/mL, 1mL ampoule	5 ampoules	Store in fridge
Phentolamine	Digital ischaemia related to injection of epinephrine	10mg/mL, 1mL ampoule	5 ampoules	
	Resistant hypertension related by sympathomimetic drugs of abuse, MAOIs, clonidine			
Phytomenadione (Vitamin K1)	Vitamin K dependent anticoagulants ³	10mg tablet; 10mg/mL, 1mL ampoule	2 tablets 10 ampoules	
Protamine sulphate	Heparin	10mg/mL, 5mL ampoule	10 ampoules	
Pyridoxine (high dose injection)	Isoniazid	50mg/mL, 1mL ampoule	100 ampoules	

Dosages of the rarely used drugs that are held supra-regionally are variable & depend on the patient's clinical condition; discuss use of these antidotes with NPIS and/or a clinical toxicologist.

Superscript notes from the tables:

- 1 Much higher doses may be required in OP poisoning; see TOXBASE for further advice
- 2 Ethanol needs frequent blood assay, ensure laboratories provide an out of hours service & have sufficient reagent
- 3 Larger doses and/or prolonged therapy may be required for long acting anticoagulants

Most antidotes listed in the guidelines are readily available within the UK. Further information is given here for unlicensed products or those with special storage or usage requirements. TOXBASE also contains details for product supply.

Unlicensed Medicines or ‘Specials’

These are exempt under Schedule 1 of the Medicines Act from the need for a marketing authorisation as they are used to fill a “special need” in response to an order from a prescriber for use in an individual patient, under that prescriber’s direct responsibility. Unlike licensed products, these may not have been assessed by the Licensing Authority against the criteria of safety, quality and efficacy.

A pharmacist in a hospital is allowed to procure a stock of ‘specials’ in order to meet an anticipated doctor’s prescription. There are various companies that import unlicensed medicines/‘specials’ into the UK. Specific records have to be kept by pharmacy for five years which include details of the product obtained, the prescriber and the patients to which the medicine is dispensed.

‘Advanced supply’ of unlicensed medicines/specials

As appropriate records must be kept, Chief Pharmacists and Trust Clinical Governance Committees should be involved in any decision to hold unlicensed products as an ‘advance supply’ in clinical areas (rather than in pharmacy). For any products held as such, that may be required for immediate use, retrospective collection of patient details must be undertaken and systems must be in place to ensure this is completed in a timely manner.

Further Information:

1. The supply of unlicensed relevant medicinal products for individual patients MHRA Guidance Note 14 Revised August 2006
2. Rarely Used Medicines Database. London, Eastern and South Eastern Specialist Pharmacy Services NHS Procurement <http://www.londonpharmacy.nhs.uk/Procurement/RUM/default.asp> [accessed 25.05.08]
3. United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacists Association Emergency Care Specialist Interest Group. <http://www.ukcpa.org/>

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