Nalbuphine 10 mg/mL & 20 mg/mL drug shortage

Issue: Nalbuphine 10 mg/mL & 20 mg/mL injections are on backorder until 2013 due to the Sandoz drug shortage. There are no other Canadian suppliers of this drug.

It is anticipated that we will run out of supply of this medication in the next 3 to 4 weeks. Alternatives need to be utilized as supply runs out.

In consultation with stakeholders, opioid-induced pruritus was the only use identified for nalbuphine in AHS.

The following alternative* is recommended for management of opioid-induced pruritus:

- Diphenhydramine oral 25 to 50 mg

Where the oral route is not feasible, consider using diphenhydramine IV for as short a period as possible. Diphenhydramine IV is impacted by the Sandoz drug shortage and is currently on allocation.

*Alternative(s) are provided for clinician information and may not be appropriate for all clinical situations. The information provided does not replace clinician judgement.

Note: Nalbuphine is indicated for the relief of moderate to severe pain, preoperative analgesia, postoperative and surgical anesthesia and obstetrical analgesia during labour and delivery. Please consult with the prescriber and/or contact Pharmacy Drug Information to determine treatment alternatives for these indications.

Identified AHS sites impacted by the nalbuphine drug shortage include:

1) Sites in Calgary Zone
2) Chinook Regional Hospital
3) St. Mary’s Hospital (Camrose)
4) Red Deer Regional Hospital

Action: Please post this notice in your area and ensure all staff is informed.

Contact: Site Pharmacy Department for any questions or concerns.

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