

Important Safety Information, Supply Anticipated shortage of euthanasia products for animals

2021/05/21

Audience

Veterinary practitioners

Key messages

- **Due to a global shortage of pentobarbital sodium, the active ingredient used in most euthanasia products for animals, a shortage is expected to impact the existing Canadian supply in mid- to late 2021 and continue until mid-2022.**
- **Health Canada, the Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) are working together with manufacturers, importers and distributors to help minimize the impact of the shortage and communicate information and updates broadly.**
 - **Veterinary practitioners have been advised of the situation.**
 - **Canadian veterinary drug distributors have developed allocation plans in order to ensure that available supply is distributed as evenly as possible.**
 - **The CVMA, through an expert advisory committee that includes veterinary pharmacists, anaesthesiologists, palliative care experts and species specialists, is developing resources and guidance on products, methods and protocols that can be used as alternatives to pentobarbital sodium products for euthanasia.**

What is the issue?

Due to a global shortage, availability in Canada of currently licensed euthanasia products containing pentobarbital sodium, manufactured by Vétoquinol and Rafter8 Products Inc., is expected to impact the existing supply in mid- to late 2021 and continue until mid-2022. Health Canada is working in collaboration with CAHI (the national association representing industry), the CVMA, drug manufacturers, importers and distributors to mitigate the impact on the veterinary health system and Canadians requiring end-of-life care for their animals/pets.

Products affected

Euthanyl (240 MG/ML injectable) & Euthanyl Forte (540 MG/ML injectable) – for dogs, cats, horses, cattle, mink, laboratory animals and birds.

Dorminal (240 MG/ML injectable) – for dogs, cats, horses, cattle, laboratory animals and birds.

Background information

Earlier in 2021, Health Canada and CAHI received reports of a global shortage of pentobarbital sodium due to an explosion at an overseas manufacturing site that occurred in December 2020.

Health Canada, CAHI and the CVMA have been working closely with drug manufacturers, importers and distributors to ensure that an information-sharing network is established and that advice is available for veterinary health professionals.

Health Canada is working to allow companies to request authorization to import alternative euthanasia products with foreign labels using an enforcement discretion approach on a temporary basis.

With respect to supply chain and distribution, CAHI is working with its membership and stakeholders to carefully manage existing and expected inventories of currently licensed pentobarbital sodium products, while longer-term mitigation strategies are developed. This includes allocations for all orders of pentobarbital sodium products, effective immediately, and the development of key messaging and resources for veterinary practitioners.

The CVMA, through an expert advisory committee that includes veterinary pharmacists, anaesthesiologists, palliative care experts and species specialists is developing resources and guidance on products, methods and protocols that can be used as alternatives to pentobarbital sodium products for euthanasia that will be shared broadly across Canada's veterinary health system.

Information for veterinary practitioners

In order to ensure that all clinics across Canada can continue to access existing inventories, veterinarians can support the management of current inventories of pentobarbital sodium by:

- administering **ONLY** the recommended dose of pentobarbital sodium euthanasia products unless more is absolutely necessary; and
- ordering **ONLY** the amount of pentobarbital sodium euthanasia products needed to cover their immediate clinic/practice needs.

For more information or inquiries related to this communication, contact Health Canada at:

Veterinary Drugs Directorate

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