

# Alternatives to Spectinomycin for Gonorrhoea Treatment

## Background

The production of spectinomycin, which is recommended for the treatment of *N. gonorrhoeae* in cases where quinolones and cephalosporins are contraindicated, has been disrupted leaving some concerns about the accessibility of the drug. Pharmacia Corporation (US) is the sole provider of this antibiotic in North America, and announced the discontinuation of spectinomycin in April 2001. The company has reversed its decision and intends to resume the production of spectinomycin later this year. They are aiming to have the product available in the U.S. by mid-October. In the meantime, the Food and Drug Administration has extended the expiration date to December 31, 2001 instead of June 30, 2001 of certain spectinomycin powder lots after removal of the expired diluent. To verify whether a particular lot of spectinomycin powder can still be used, contact Wendy Johnson, Pharmacia Corporation, at 1-800-976-7741 ext. 30110.

Since a supply gap may occur in the interim, the following recommendations outline different options for the treatment of gonorrhoea in individuals that have documented cephalosporin allergy and are pregnant or are strongly suspected to have fluoroquinolone-resistant gonorrhoea.

## Treatment Options

To be used in conjunction with the Gonococcal Infections section in the *Canadian STD Guidelines, 1998 Edition*.

### 1. Spectinomycin 2 g IM in a single dose

At the present time, there is no remaining stock to be issued from Pharmacia Canada. It may be possible to locate an off-shore manufacturer to supply spectinomycin on a case-by-case basis. Contact the local Drug Information Centre for more information. Once a manufacturer has been selected, Therapeutic Products Directorate, Health Canada has a mechanism called the Special Access Program (SAP) in place to provide access to non-marketed drugs for treating patients where other therapies are unsuitable or unavailable.

Please see the Appendix for a list of Drug Information Centres across Canada and the sidebar at right for SAP contact information.

### 2. Azithromycin 2 g orally in a single dose

There are encouraging data on the use of high dose azithromycin (2 g) in treating non-pregnant individuals with gonorrhoea.

## How to Request Special Access to an Emergency Drug

Practitioners may fax, phone or write to SAP to request a drug with the following information:

- Practitioner's name and telephone number
- Address of the practitioner's office/clinic or hospital pharmacy where the drug can be delivered
- Drug name and dosage form (e.g., tablet, ointment)
- Manufacturer's name and address
- Total quantity of the drug requested
- Patient's initials, date of birth, gender
- Medical indication for use of the drug
- Rationale for choosing a non-marketed drug over other licensed therapies

Contact information for SAP:

Special Access Program  
Therapeutic Products Directorate  
Finance Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Tunney's Pasture  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1B6  
A/L 0202C1

Phone: (613) 941-2108

(8:30-16:30 EST)

After hours phone: (613) 941-3061

Fax: (613) 941-3194

Email: EDR\_Drugs-BPA@hc-sc.gc.ca

Internet: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb-dgps/therapeut



The following is a list of physicians who perform cephalosporin desensitization. Please note that only those physicians who were contacted by the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and agreed to have their information contained in this document have been included.

**Dr. Eric Leith**

302-331 Sheddon Avenue  
Oakville ON L6J 1X8  
Tel: 905-842-6555  
Fax: 905-842-4190

**University of Western Ontario Drug Allergy Clinic**

Tel: 519-685-8167

**Dr. Frederick A. White**

481 Park St.  
Kitchener ON N2G 1N7  
Tel: 519-578-9199  
Fax: 519-578-6109

Effectiveness in pregnant women has to be extrapolated at this point even though metabolism may be different in pregnant women. Based on limited data, azithromycin has not been associated with adverse fetal outcomes (Class B). Possible side effects include severe gastrointestinal distress. Test of cure is required for all cases using azithromycin.

3. **Cephalosporin desensitisation<sup>1</sup> under the care of an allergy physician**

Because of potential anaphylaxis when performing cephalosporin desensitisation, an allergy physician may perform penicillin skin testing (such test kits are in short supply) to assess the likelihood of an IgE-mediated allergic reaction if a cephalosporin is administered.

If cephalosporin desensitisation is then deemed necessary, it will usually be performed in an ICU setting and requires careful monitoring by an allergy physician. This option should be considered only after all other alternatives have been weighed. A list of allergy physicians who perform cephalosporin desensitisation is shown in the sidebar to the left. Please note that the availability of allergy physicians to perform desensitisation is severely limited and restricted only to major medical centres across the country.

<sup>1</sup> For additional information on this topic, please refer to N Engl J Med 2001;345 (11):804-809.

These recommendations have been prepared in collaboration with Provincial/Territorial partners and national experts. For more information, please contact:

Division of Sexual Health Promotion and STD Prevention and Control  
Bureau of HIV/AIDS, STD and TB  
Health Canada  
7th Floor, Jeanne Mance Building  
Tunney's Pasture  
A.L. 1907A4  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.  
*Health Canada*

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Drug Information Centres**

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

##### **BRITISH COLUMBIA DRUG & POISON INFORMATION CENTRE**

1081 Burrard St.,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1Y6  
Tel: (604) 682-2344, ext. 2126  
Fax: (604) 631-5262  
Contact: Derek Daws, Managing Director  
E-mail: daws@dpic.bc.ca  
Expertise: B.C. Regional Adverse Drug Reaction Program, drug usage review, drugs in pregnancy, herbal medicine, toxicology A regional centre. Available to all health professionals

##### **SENIORS MEDICATION INFORMATION LINE (SMILE)**

University of British Columbia  
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences  
2146 East Mall,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3  
Tel: 1-800-668-6233 (B.C. only)  
(604) 822-8010, ext. 6041  
Fax: (604) 822-3035  
E-mail: rpriatel@unixg.ubc.ca  
Contact: Rola Priatel, D.I. Coordinator  
Expertise: Asthma

##### **VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
855 West 12th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1M9  
Tel: (604) 875-4077 Fax: (604) 875-5267  
Contact: Nilu Partovi, Supervisor and Clinical Pharmacy Specialist  
Written requests only

##### **ROYAL JUBILEE HOSPITAL**

Capital Health Region  
Pharmacy Department  
1900 Fort St.,  
Victoria, B.C. V8R 1J8  
Tel: (250) 370-8242 Fax: (250) 370-8615  
Contact: Jane Bettany, D.I. Coordinator  
Expertise: General drug information

##### **VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Capital Health Region  
Pharmacy Department  
1 Hospital Way,  
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 6R5  
Tel: (250) 727-4636 Fax: (250) 727-4126  
E-mail: jdheere@caphealth.org or jdodsworth@caphealth.org  
Contact: Jane Dheere, D.I. Pharmacist or Jessie Dodsworth,  
D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information

#### **ALBERTA**

##### **CALGARY REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**

Peter Lougheed Centre Pharmacy  
3500-26th Ave. N.E.,  
Calgary, Alta. T1Y 6J4  
Tel: (403) 291-8990 Fax: (403) 291-8889  
Contact: Jennifer Herrick, D.I. and Drug Use Evaluation Pharmacist  
E-mail: Jennifer.Herrick@crha-Health.ab.ca  
For hospital staff only

##### **POISON & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICES (PADIS)**

c/o CRHA, Foothills Medical Centre  
1403-29th St. N.W.,  
Calgary, Alta. T2N 2T9  
Tel: (403) 670-1222 or 1-800-332-1082 (Alta. only)  
Fax: (403) 670-1472  
E-mail: fh-padis@crha-Health.ab.ca  
Contact: Cheryl McGrath-Hill, Facilitator – Drug Information Services  
Expertise: Computerized databases for statistics, toxicology

##### **CAPITAL HEALTH REGION DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE**

Royal Alexandra Hospital Site  
Pharmacy Department  
10240 Kingsway  
Edmonton, Alta. T5H 3V9  
Tel: (780) 477-4463 Fax: (780) 491-5116  
Contact: Karen Horon, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services are primarily for hospital staff

##### **CAPITAL HEALTH REGION DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE**

University of Alberta Hospital Site  
Pharmacy Department  
8440-112 St.  
Edmonton, Alta. T6G 2B7  
Tel: (780) 407-7404 Fax: (780) 492-0885  
Contact: Carol Borynec, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services are primarily for hospital staff

#### **SASKATCHEWAN**

##### **SASKATCHEWAN CONSUMER DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE (CDIC)**

University of Saskatchewan  
College of Pharmacy and Nutrition  
110 Science Pl.,  
Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 5C9  
Tel: (306) 975-DRUG or 1-800-665-DRUG (Sask. only)  
Fax: (306) 966-6377  
Contact: Paul Melnyk or Maya Wagner, D.I. Consultants  
Expertise: Consumer drug information to all residents of Saskatchewan  
For consumers only

**SASKATCHEWAN DIAL ACCESS DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (DADIS)**

University of Saskatchewan  
College of Pharmacy and Nutrition  
110 Science Pl.,  
Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 5C9  
Tel: (306) 966-6340 or 1-800-665-3784 (Sask. only)  
Fax: (306) 966-6377  
Contact: Paul Melnyk, D.I. Consultant  
Expertise: Computerized database for statistics and retrieval of previous cases, regional ADR reporting program, provincial drug information service for all health professionals

**MANITOBA**

**HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE**

Pharmacy Department  
820 Sherbrook St.,  
Winnipeg, Man. R3A 1R9  
Tel: (204) 787-1097 Fax: (204) 787-3195  
Contact: Cathy Sochasky, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Not a regional centre: Services primarily for hospital staff

**MEDICATION INFORMATION LINE FOR THE ELDERLY (MILE)**

University of Manitoba  
Room 407-F, Faculty of Pharmacy  
Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2N2  
Tel: (204) 261-3111 or 1-800-432-1960, ext. 6493 (Man. only)  
Fax: (204) 474-7626  
E-mail: vanmiddl@ms.umanitoba.ca  
Contact: Betty Van Middlesworth,  
Pharmacist Consultant  
Expertise: Medication information for elderly, care providers and health-care professionals

**MISERICORDIA HEALTH CENTRE**

Pharmacy Department  
99 Cornish Ave.,  
Winnipeg, Man. R3C 1A2  
Tel: (204) 788-8242 Fax: (204) 774-8488  
E-mail: afriesen@miseri.winnipeg.mb.ca  
Contact: Anne Friesen, Coordinator, D.I./Drug Utilization Review  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services primarily for hospital staff

**ST. BONIFACE GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
409 Tache Ave.,  
Winnipeg, Man. R2H 2A6  
Tel: (204) 237-2630 Fax: (204) 237-2165  
Contact: Anita Richard, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services for hospital staff only

**ONTARIO**

**HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES CORPORATION**

McMaster Site  
Drug Information Centre  
Pharmacy Department, Box 2000,  
Hamilton, Ont. L8N 3Z5  
Tel: (905) 521-2100, ext. 6019  
Fax: (905) 521-5008  
Contact: Marita Tonkin or Gita Sobhi, D.I. Pharmacists  
E-mail: tonkin@exchange1.cmh.on.ca or sobhi@exchange1.cmh.on.ca  
Services primarily for hospital staff

**HENDERSON GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
711 Concession St.,  
Hamilton, Ont. L8V 1C3  
Tel: (905) 527-4322, ext. 2190 or  
(905) 389-4411 Fax: (905) 575-2643  
Contact: Jeff Thompson, Site Co-ordinator, Pharmacy Department  
Expertise: Investigational studies in oncology, pharmacokinetics of vancomycin, gentamicin and tobramycin  
Services for hospital staff only

**GRAND RIVER HOSPITAL**

Kitchener-Waterloo Health Centre  
Pharmacy Department  
P.O. Box 9056,  
Kitchener, Ont. N2G 1G3  
Tel: (519) 749-4300, ext. 2206  
Fax: (519) 749-4228  
Contact: Don McCuen, Clinical Pharmacist, D.I. and Antibiotic Utilization  
Expertise: Home IV therapy, palliative care, dialysis, computerized drug information, pediatrics, critical care  
A regional centre: Services for anyone

**KINGSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
76 Stuart St., Kingston, Ont. K7L 2V7  
Tel: (613) 548-2305  
Fax: (613) 548-6079  
Contact: Any on-duty pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information

**LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE – LONDIS**

University Hospital Campus  
Department of Pharmacy Services  
339 Windermere Rd., Box 5339  
London, Ont. N6A 5A5  
Tel: (519) 663-3172 or 1-800-363-8434  
(for area codes 705, 519 & 905 only)  
Fax: (519) 663-2968  
Contact: Gail Judd, Linda Hooper, Sandra Campbell, Susan Lovell,  
Laura Drost, D.I. Pharmacists  
Expertise: Transplantation, neurology, cardiology, oncology, pediatrics  
A regional centre: services are available to subscribers

#### CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO (CHEO)

Pharmacy Department  
401 Smyth Rd.,  
Ottawa, Ont. K1H 8L1  
Tel: (613) 738-3614 or (613) 737-2228  
Fax: (613) 738-4206  
E-mail: [swartz@cheo.on.ca](mailto:swartz@cheo.on.ca)  
Contact: Ronald Swartz, Director of Pharmacy  
Expertise: Pediatrics  
Not a regional service: Services for hospital staff only

#### OTTAWA HOSPITAL, CIVIC CAMPUS

Pharmacy Department  
1053 Carling Ave.,  
Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 4E9  
Tel: (613) 798-5555, ext. 6683 Fax: (613) 761-4350  
Contact: Anne Massicotte, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: Cardiology/cardiothoracic surgery, geriatrics, critical care,  
PCA programs, neurology  
Services for hospital staff only

#### OTTAWA HOSPITAL, GENERAL CAMPUS

Pharmacy Department  
Ottawa General Hospital  
501 Smyth Rd.,  
Ottawa, Ont. K1H 8L6  
Tel: (613) 737-8344  
Fax: (613) 737-8891  
Contact: Mario Bédard, Drug Information Specialist  
E-mail: [mbedard@ogh.on.ca](mailto:mbedard@ogh.on.ca)  
Expertise: HIV/AIDS, bone marrow transplantation, neurology, bone and  
joint diseases, literature evaluation  
Service for hospital staff only

#### OTTAWA VALLEY REGIONAL DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (OVRDIS)

Ottawa Hospital, General Campus  
501 Smyth Rd.,  
Ottawa, Ont. K1H 8L6  
Tel: (613) 737-8347 Fax: (613) 737-8891  
Contact: Denis Bélanger, D.I. Specialist ([dbelanger@ogh.on.ca](mailto:dbelanger@ogh.on.ca)), or Dina  
MacLeod, D.I. Pharmacist ([dmacleod@ogh.on.ca](mailto:dmacleod@ogh.on.ca))  
Expertise: HIV/AIDS, Bone marrow transplantation, neurology, bone and  
joint diseases, literature evaluation  
Service open to OVRDIS subscribers only

#### CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION RESEARCH FOUNDATION SITE

Pharmacy Department  
33 Russell St.,  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 2S1  
Tel: (416) 595-6014 Fax: (416) 595-6606  
E-mail: [ejanecek@arf.org](mailto:ejanecek@arf.org)  
Contact: Eva Janecek, Head of Pharmacy Services  
Expertise: Substance abuse  
Services for anyone in Ontario

#### CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH, CLARKE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY SITE

Pharmacy Department  
250 College St.,  
Toronto, Ont. M5T 1R8  
Tel: (416) 979-6802 Fax: (416) 979-4995  
Contact: Kalyna Butler, Head of Pharmacy  
Expertise: Psychiatry  
A regional centre: Services for anyone

#### HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, THE

Pharmacy Department  
555 University Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M5G 1X8  
Poison info: (416) 813-5900 or  
1-800-268-9017 (Ontario only)  
Drug info: (416) 813-6703  
Motherisk Clinic, Alcohol & Substance Use Line: 1-877-327-4636  
(Toll-free)  
Motherisk Clinic: (416) 813-6780 (calls from outside Ontario will not be  
returned)  
Manufacturing-pharmacy: (416) 813-6701  
Fax: (416) 813-5880 (Pharmacy Department)  
Web site: [www.sickkids.com](http://www.sickkids.com)  
Contact: Joanne Smith, D.I. Coordinator  
E-mail: [Joanne.Smith@mailhub.sickkids.on.ca](mailto:Joanne.Smith@mailhub.sickkids.on.ca)  
Motherisk contact: Susan Santiago  
Expertise: Pediatrics, extemporaneous formulations  
Not a regional centre: Calls from outside hospitals answered as time  
permits

#### METRO TORONTO HOSPITALS DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (METRODIS)

Sunnybrook & Women's College  
Health Sciences Centre  
2075 Bayview Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4N 3M5  
Tel: (416) 480-4514 Fax: (416) 480-6868  
Contact: Irene Worthington, coordinator  
A regional centre. Services for hospital subscribers

#### MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL

Department of Pharmacy Services  
600 University Ave., Room 1506,  
Toronto, Ont. M5G 1X5  
Tel: (416) 586-8582 Fax: (416) 586-8353  
Web site: [www.mtsinai.on.ca](http://www.mtsinai.on.ca)  
Contact: Any on-duty pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS' ASSOCIATION

Drug Information and Research Centre  
301-23 Lesmill Rd.,  
Don Mills, Ont. M3B 3P6  
Tel: (416) 385-3472 or 1-800-268-8058 Fax: (416) 385-2442  
Contact: Kris Wichman, Vice-President of Professional Affairs

**ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
30 Bond St.,  
Toronto, Ont. M5B 1W8  
Tel: (416) 864-5747 Fax: (416) 864-6058  
Contact: Any on-duty pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services for hospital staff only

**ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL, WELLESLEY-CENTRAL SITE**

Pharmacy Department  
160 Wellesley St. E.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1J3  
Tel: (416) 926-7099 Fax: (416) 926-5050  
Contact: Janice Wells, Director of Pharmacy, Rafelina Greco,  
D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: AIDS treatment, GI therapies using endoscopic procedures,  
rheumatology, burn centre, lithotripsy, cystic fibrosis  
Services for hospital staff only

**SUNNYBROOK & WOMEN'S COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE**

Drug Information Service  
2075 Bayview Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4N 3M5  
Tel: (416) 480-4513 Fax: (416) 480-6868  
E-mail: john.iazzetta@sunnybrook.on.ca  
Contact: John Iazzetta, Coordinator, Drug Information Centre  
Services for hospital staff only

**TORONTO EAST GENERAL AND ORTHOPAEDIC HOSPITAL**

Department of Pharmaceutical Services,  
825 Coxwell Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4C 3E7  
Tel: (416) 469-6036 Pager: (416) 501-3574 Fax: (416) 469-6325  
E-mail: pharmcy@tegh.on.ca  
Contact: Faith Jenner, D.I. Pharmacist  
Expertise: General drug information  
Services are available to anyone

**TORONTO HOSPITAL**

Toronto General Division  
Pharmacy Department  
200 Elizabeth St.,  
Room B216–Eaton N.  
Toronto, Ont. M5G 2C4  
Tel: (416) 340-3779 Fax: (416) 340-3685  
Contact: John Murdoch, D.I. Pharmacist  
Services for hospital staff only

**QUEBEC****HÔPITAL DU SACRÉ-COEUR DE MONTRÉAL**

Centre d'information pharmaceutique  
5400 Blvd. Gouin Ouest,  
Montréal, Que. H4J 1C5  
Tel: 1-888-265-7692 or (514) 338-2161  
Fax: (514) 338-3670  
E-mail: cip.hscm@sympatico.ca  
Contact: Eva Cohen, Chief Pharmacist  
Expertise: Adverse drug reactions  
A provincial centre available to subscribers

**HOPITAL GENERAL JUIF–SIR MORTIMER B. DAVIS**

Pharmacy Department  
3755 Chêmin de la Côte Ste. Catherine,  
Montréal, Que. H3T 1E2  
Tel: (514) 340-8222, ext. 4671  
Fax: (514) 340-8201  
Contact: Any on-duty pharmacist  
Expertise: Adverse drug reaction program, pharmacokinetics, oncology,  
patient counselling, drug use evaluation, TPN, IV admixture, neonatology,  
drug information bulletins, computerized databases,  
research, cardiology  
Services primarily for hospital staff

**ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy Department  
687 Pine Ave. W.,  
Montréal, Que. H3A 1A1  
Contact: My Linh Tran, Coordinator of Clinical and Technical Support  
Services  
Tel: (514) 842-1231 Fax: (514) 843-1474

**NOVA SCOTIA****QUEEN ELIZABETH II HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE**

Drug Information Centre  
1796 Summer St., Room 2421,  
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A7  
Tel: (902) 473-4234 (Camp Hill site)  
(902) 473-6830 (Victoria General site)  
Fax: (902) 473-8612 (Camp Hill site)  
(902) 473-1606 (Victoria General site)  
E-mail: rxcbt@qe2-hsc.ns.ca  
Contact: Brian Tuttle, Manager, Drug Information Services  
Expertise: Atlantic ADR Regional Centre, drug evaluation program,  
computerized drug information databases  
DI inquiries for hospital staff only

**REGIONAL DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (RDIS)**

Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre  
1796 Summer St., Room 2421,  
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A7  
Tel: (902) 473-4211 or 1-800-565-3003 (N.B. and P.E.I. only)  
Fax: (902) 473-8612  
E-mail: rxrdis@qe2-hsc.ns.ca  
Contact: Brian Tuttle, Manager  
Expertise: General drug information  
A regional referral service to external callers in N.S., N.B. and P.E.I.

**NEWFOUNDLAND**

**SCHOOL OF PHARMACY DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE**

Memorial University of Newfoundland  
The Health Sciences Centre,  
St. John's, Nfld. A1B 3V6  
Tel: (709) 737-3377 Fax: (709) 737-7044  
Contact: Audrey Fultz, DI Pharmacist  
E-mail: afultz@morgan.ucs.mun.ca

Source: Pharmacy Connects. Drug Information Centres, July 1999.  
URL: <<http://www.pharmacyconnects.com/content/phpractice/1999/07-99/php079902.html>>.