



Health, Healthy Living and Seniors

Public Health and Primary Health Care Division
Communicable Disease Control
4049 – 300 Carlton Street
Winnipeg MB, Canada R3B 3M9
T 204-788-6791 F 204-948-2190
www.manitoba.ca

DATE: July 2, 2015

Dear Colleague,

RE: THE MANUFACTURER OF ETHAMBUTOL RECENTLY REVEALED AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF ETHAMBUTOL ACROSS CANADA WITH IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF ETHAMBUTOL TO PATIENTS IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING.

▪ ***Ethambutol Alternative(s)***

- 1) Treatment of newly diagnosed TB disease in adults and children - use moxifloxacin or levofloxacin instead of ethambutol in the first line TB regimen i.e. Rifampin, Isoniazid (INH), Pyrazinamide, and Moxifloxacin or Levofloxacin (RIP-M/L)
- 2) Empiric treatment of newly diagnosed *Mycobacterium avium-intracellulae* (MAIC) complex infections in adult HIV patients – use moxifloxacin instead of ethambutol.

▪ ***Ethambutol Indications***

Ethambutol should be reserved for the following indications:

- 1) Treatment of TB disease in:
 - a. Patients with documented INH resistant TB or,
 - b. Severe liver dysfunction either pre-existing or suspected drug induced liver injury secondary to first line TB agents (e.g. isoniazid or pyrazinamide) or,
 - c. Contraindication or hypersensitivity to fluoroquinolones (e.g. moxifloxacin/levofloxacin)
- 2) Treatment of MAIC infections in:
 - a. HIV infected children under the age of 18 years
 - b. Non-immunocompromised patients where treatment options are limited.

Ethambutol is used in combination for the treatment of tuberculosis or *Mycobacterium avium-intracellulae* complex (MAC a.k.a. MAI/MAIC) infections.

Patients who are prescribed ethambutol for MAIC infections should be sent to the Prescription Shop pharmacy to obtain their medication. Patients who are prescribed ethambutol for TB disease should have their prescriptions completed as per usual process using the MHHLS TB prescription form <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/activetb.pdf>

To consult a clinician regarding the treatment of TB or MAIC, please refer to http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/tb_contact.pdf

Your assistance is requested to aid in managing this shortage by using alternatives to ethambutol when appropriate and by reserving ethambutol for the indications stated above.

Please share this communication with all colleagues in your department, facility or clinic.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By Richard Rusk

Original Signed by Richard Baydack

Richard Rusk MD CCFP MPH
Medical Officer of Health
Communicable Disease Control

Richard Baydack, PhD
Director
Communicable Disease Control