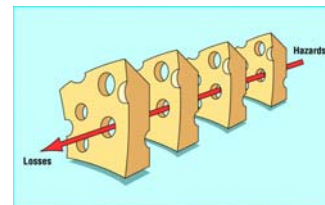


Medicines Governance Project



SAFETY MEMO 3

From: Medicines Governance Pharmacists,
Tracey Boyce
Sharon O'Donnell

Barbara Milliken
Jillian Redpath

18/06/03
Kathryn King
Lisa Smith

To:

Directors of Pharmaceutical Services / Trust Pharmacy Managers

Dr N Morrow, Chief Pharmacist, DHSSPSNI

Directors of Pharmacy, HSS Boards

} For information

RE: Strength of dexamethasone injection.

Traditionally the strength of dexamethasone injectable products has been given in terms of it's salts, either the sodium phosphate or the phosphate. The BNF adult doses of parenteral dexamethasone are given as dexamethasone phosphate while doses for children are often expressed as dexamethasone base.

The Faulding brand supplied by Mayne, via the Northern Ireland Regional Drugs Contract, is labelled as 8mg/2ml – the strength of dexamethasone phosphate contained in the vials.

Due to a temporary supply issue, Mayne are offering to supply the Organon brand of dexamethasone injection. The Organon vials are labelled as 10mg/2ml – the strength of the dexamethasone sodium phosphate.

The following table summarises the strengths of the different forms of dexamethasone in each of the companies' products.

| Brand | Product pack labelled as | Dexamethasone phosphate | Dexamethasone base | Dexamethasone sodium phosphate |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Faulding (Mayne) | 8mg/2ml | 8mg/2ml | 6.6mg/2ml | 8.6mg/2ml |
| Organon | 10mg/2ml | 9.2mg/2ml | 7.6mg/2ml | 10mg/2ml |

To avoid dosing errors the following text is suggested for additional labelling of the Organon brand of dexamethasone injection.

**Dexamethasone Sodium Phosphate 10mg in 2ml
is equivalent to
Dexamethasone Phosphate 9.2mg in 2ml**

**If 8mg Dexamethasone Phosphate is prescribed
administer 1.7 ml of this injection**

****Always check which form is required – for further
information contact Pharmacy****

Tracey Boyce
Team Leader,
On behalf of the Project Team.