Interim Alcohol-based Hand Rub (ABHR) Preservation and Prioritization Measures

Note: This guideline applies to ongoing supply chain issues related to ABHR/Technical-grade Ethanol.
If you have any questions or comments regarding this Information Sheet contact Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) at ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca.

Shortage of Microsan® over the next several weeks

Microsan® is currently on back order. One-litre (1L) Microsan® Optidose™ cartridges (Fig. 1) used in wall-mounted alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) dispensers (Fig. 2) will not be available for four to six weeks, and quantities will be limited for another two to four weeks. Temporary preservation and prioritization measures may require sites to relocate existing 1L Optidose™ cartridges to areas deemed high priority, leaving others temporarily empty (Fig. 3). This will lead to increased use of portable dispensers with an associated increased safety and monitoring requirements. Alternate ABHRs will continue to be provided. AHS continues to work with ABHR suppliers and manufacturers on issues associated with technical-grade ethanol and availability of product. Report concerns about specific ABHR dispensers via the online Medical Device Incident or Problem form (AHS login required) and dispose of product as per site processes.

In pediatric sites and units, neonatal intensive care units, maternity/child units, labour and delivery units, portable ABHR dispensers containing pharmaceutical-grade ethanol or isopropanol continues to be distributed. Wall-mounted Optidose™ dispensers in those areas may contain Optidose™ cartridges made with technical-grade ethanol. These dispensers will be labelled accordingly, including a poster alert at or near the dispenser.

ACTION

Temporary preservation measures will be necessary, including reallocation of 1L Optidose™ cartridges, decommissioning of select dispensers and ongoing use of alternate products.

Site management should determine a site-wide process to prioritize Optidose™ location

- Identify locations where wall-mounted Optidose™ dispensers can be temporarily decommissioned. This may require a multi-disciplinary team that includes, but is not limited to:
  - Linen & Environmental Services;
  - Unit/area representation; and
  - Infection Prevention and Control.

- Examples of possible areas to consider dispenser decommissioning include:
  - Conference/meeting rooms, staff rooms, back-of-house, public corridors or hallways.
• Consider areas where the wall-mounted Optidose™ dispensers can be temporarily replaced with a portable dispenser and the product can be monitored (e.g., screening stations).

• Consider decommissioning temporary, additional ABHR dispensers installed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

• Collect and redistribute current 1L Optidose™ cartridges.
  - Remove the cartridge and place a label (Fig. 3) directly onto the dispenser cover.
  - **Note**: refer to page 3 for dispenser labels (6 per page). Print and cut as many as required.

• Do **not** attempt to refill 1L Optidose™ cartridges by compromising the integrity of the cartridge.

• Ensure new 1L Optidose™ cartridges are distributed to the prioritized dispensers.

### Safe placement of portable (400ml or 500ml) ABHR dispensers during a shortage of 1L Optidose™ cartridges

A temporary increase in the use of portable ABHR dispensers during the Optidose™ cartridge shortage will increase the risk of harm due to ingestion – intentional and unintentional. **Sites must ensure portable ABHR dispensers are monitored** and opportunities for theft and intentional and unintentional ingestion are minimal.

Examples of areas that have reduced or limited patient or public movement include:

- critical care areas;
- medication rooms;
- operating rooms;
- back-of-house; and
- locations where staff are continuously present (e.g., screening stations).

All portable ABHR dispensers must be under continuous AHS monitoring. More information on ABHR guidelines are available [online](#).

### Alternate products including some containing technical-grade ethanol

AHS has sourced alternate ABHR from different vendors to ensure staff, patients, families and visitors have access to product where and when they need it. These products meet Health Canada requirements for safety, effectiveness and quality and use the World Health Organization - recommended hand rub formulations. These new products may look, smell and feel different from other products; they are effective in killing and preventing the spread of microorganisms. Some products have different viscosities (liquid vs. gel vs. foam). Liquid products may create a slipping hazard if it drips onto the floor. More information on Workplace Health & Safety considerations can be found in the [IPC Recommendations for ABHR during COVID-19 Pandemic](#) document.

AHS is labelling hand sanitizer products that contain technical-grade ethanol that is not already labelled as such and placing posters near dispensers of impacted products.

Hand hygiene continues to be essential to the health and wellness of our patients and staff. If you choose not to use hand sanitizer labelled as containing technical-grade ethanol, it is critical that you wash hands with soap and warm water instead.

For more information visit [ahs.ca/handsanitizer](#).
Sorry, this dispenser is temporarily out of service.
Please find the nearest alcohol-based hand rub dispenser or hand washing sink.

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