

CLINICAL ALERT

DECEMBER | 2022



Albuterol Inhalation Solution for Nebulization – Drug Shortage

Issue

The U.S. is experiencing an interruption in the dependable availability of **albuterol inhalation solutions for nebulization**. Albuterol is a Short-Acting Beta₂ Agonist (SABA) which is used for the treatment or prophylaxis of bronchospasm in patients with **asthma, exercise-induced asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**.

Alternative nebulized therapies for asthma and COPD treatment, such as **levalbuterol** and **ipratropium-albuterol**, are also seeing high demand as a result of the albuterol inhalation solution shortage and subsequent supply issues are expected.

Products Affected

Albuterol Sulfate 0.5% inhalation solutions for nebulization are being explicitly tracked as an absolute shortage by the [ASHP Drug Shortage Database](#) (shown below).

- **Albuterol Sulfate inhalation solution**, Akorn, 0.5% 5mg/mL, 20 mL bottle, 1 count, NDC 50383-0741-20
- **Albuterol Sulfate inhalation solution**, Nephron Pharmaceuticals Corporation, 0.5% 2.5mg/0.5 mL, Unit-of-use vial, 30 count, NDC 00487-9901-30

Consequently, all strengths of albuterol inhalation solutions for nebulization are now experiencing short supply and are being allocated based on historical needs.

Reason for Shortage

Manufacturers have not provided explicit reasons for shortage.

Nationwide, increased market demand for albuterol inhalation solution for nebulization has occurred across the recent period marked by high respiratory illness rates, including Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Estimated Resupply Date(s)

- Akorn has albuterol sulfate 0.5% inhalation solution on back order and estimates a release date in 1Q 2023.
- Nephron has albuterol sulfate 0.5% inhalation solution on back order and estimates a release date in mid-December 2022.
- More information is available from [ASHP](#).

Action Steps

PharMerica Pharmacies

- Monitor for availability of product and maximize orders per allocation limits.
- Proactively communicate with serviced facilities to notify stakeholders of ongoing local supply status.
- Notify serviced facilities when prescription orders are unable to be fulfilled due to drug unavailability and provide alternatives as feasible.
 - Albuterol Metered Dose Inhalers (+/- spacer) may be considered for residents with sufficient coordination for use, who need short-acting rescue doses.
 - Metered Dose Inhaler formulations of **albuterol, levalbuterol, and ipratropium-albuterol** are currently **not** affected by the supply shortage.

Facilities

- When notified of drug unavailability, solicit recommendations from prescribers and obtain orders for alternative therapies or administration forms as appropriate for residents' condition.