CLINICAL **ADVISORY**

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PharMerica

CDC Advises to Stop Use of EzriCare Artificial Tears Lubricant Eye Drops

Issue

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges **halting use of EzriCare Artificial Tears Lubricant Eye Drops** pending investigation into multi-state infection outbreaks causing permanent vision loss, hospitalization and one death.

Currently, the CDC probe is ongoing, and a manufacturer recall has not been officially issued. However, it is prudent to **discontinue use of any EzriCare Artificial Tears Lubricant Eye Drops** until more definitive findings are published.

Specifically, the CDC investigation focuses on epidemiology and laboratory evidence linking the infections to the EzriCare products and possible contamination with *P. aeruginosa* – a bacteria notably causative to healthcare associated infections.

Products Affected

EzriCare™ Lubricant Eye Drops (Carboxymethylcellulose Sodium, 10mg in 1mL) in ½ fl. oz (15mL) containers (NDC: 79503-0101-15).

Action Steps

PharMerica Pharmacies

- If orders for affected product were generated and sent to facilities, pharmacy to pick up the affected product.
- Check on-hand inventory for affected product and quarantine to prevent dispensing, pending further information from CDC.
- Halt further orders for affected product (CDC has not issued a stop-use recommendation for other artificial tear products at this time).

Facilities

- Check on-hand stock for affected product provided from PharMerica and from other vendors.
- Remove affected products from all areas and segregate for return to the originating vendor (PharMerica or other pharmacy) and notify that vendor of any affected stock for pick up.
- If adverse reactions or infections are experienced with the use of this product, submit a report online to: www.fda.gov/medwatch/report.htm

Sample Package Image

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Background

Per CDC statement, The CDC has been investigating a multistate cluster of Verona Integron-mediated Metallo-β-lactamase (VIM)- and Guiana-Extended Spectrum-β-Lactamase (GES)- producing carbapenem-resistant Pseudomonas aeruginosa (VIM-GES-CRPA) associated with multiple different infection types, including eye infections. Recent epidemiology and laboratory evidence link these infections to use of EzriCare Artificial Tears.

From May 17, 2022, to January 19, 2023, CDC, in partnership with state and local health departments, identified 56 isolates from 50 case patients from 11 states (CA, CO, CT, FL, NJ, NM, NY, NV, TX, UT, WA) with VIM-GES-CRPA; 38 cases are part of 4 facility clusters. Dates of specimen collection are from May to December 2022. Isolates have been identified from clinical cultures of cornea (10), sputum or bronchial wash (11), urine (6), other nonsterile sources (4), and blood (2), and from rectal swabs (23) collected for surveillance. These specimens were collected in both outpatient and inpatient healthcare settings. Patient outcomes include permanent vision loss resulting from ocular infection, hospitalization, and death of one patient with bloodstream infection.

Laboratory testing of EzriCare Artificial Tears by CDC identified the presence of VIM-CRPA in opened EzriCare bottles; these VIM-CRPA are undergoing further characterization, including testing for GES and to determine ST, to assess if they match the outbreak strain. Testing of unopened bottles of EzriCare Artificial Tears is ongoing.

CDC recommends that clinicians and patients immediately discontinue the use of EzriCare Artificial Tears until the epidemiological investigation and laboratory analyses are complete.