MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MESSAGE ID:	**MSHAN - 20231512– 00598– ALT (Health Alert)**
RECIPIENTS:	**All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, PAs, and Healthcare Providers – Statewide**
	Friday, December 15, 2023
SUBJECT:	**National Erythromycin Shortage Impacting Neonatal Ocular Prophylaxis**

Dear Colleagues,

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lists Erythromycin Ointment on the drug shortage list in the US due to increased demand (FDA Drug Shortages). The expected duration of the shortage is unknown.
- Erythromycin ointment is used in newborns at birth as neonatal ocular prophylaxis to prevent gonococcal ophthalmia neonatorum
- Mississippi continues to see high rates of gonorrhea:
    - In 2021, Mississippi reported 427.7 cases per 100,000 people
    - In 2021, Mississippi ranked 1st in the US for rate of gonorrhea
    - See Tables (cdc.gov) for 2021 Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance data from CDC.
- Rule 1.17.12 of the Mississippi Rules and Regulations Governing Reportable Diseases and Conditions (1719.pdf (ms.gov)) requires healthcare providers attending births to administer prophylaxis to newborns to prevent gonococcal ophthalmia neonatorum.
    - An emergency modification to this rule is being filed with the Mississippi Secretary of State to allow the following recommendations.

Mississippi physician, provider, and healthcare facility recommendations while the erythromycin ointment shortage is ongoing:

- Healthcare providers, hospitals and healthcare facilities **with limited supply** should reserve prophylaxis with erythromycin ointment for infants at risk for gonococcal ophthalmia neonatorum:
    - Infants born to mothers with no prenatal care
    - Infants born to mothers at risk for gonococcal infection (e.g., women aged <25 years and those aged ≥25 years who have a new sex partner, more than one sex partner, a sex partner with concurrent partners, a sex partner who has an STI, or live in a community with high rates of gonorrhea)
- Healthcare providers, hospitals, and healthcare facilities with limited or no supply of erythromycin ointment should consider screening for gonorrhea at delivery for women not tested during pregnancy and/or at risk for infection.
    - If testing is done at delivery, ensure prompt follow up and treatment of mother and infant if positive.

- If erythromycin ointment is **unavailable**, please review the CDC recommended alternative regimen: [Gonorrhea / Neonates (up to 4 weeks) (cdc.gov)](cdc.gov)

Additional Resources:
- FDA Drug Shortages
- [Dear Healthcare Provider Letter: Temporary Importation of Steri-Med Pharma, Inc.'s Erythromycin Ophthalmic Ointment 5mg/g to Address Drug Shortage](link)
- [Gonorrhea / Neonates (up to 4 weeks) (cdc.gov)](cdc.gov)

Please contact the MSDH Office of Epidemiology at 601-576-7725 with questions.

Regards,

Kathryn Taylor, MD
Interim State Epidemiologist

Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency:	Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program:	**MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)**
Message Identifier:	MSHAN-20231512-00598-**ALT**
Program (HAN) Type:	**Health Alert**
Status (Type):	Actual ()
Message Type:	Health Alert
Reference:	MSHAN-00598
Severity:	Unknown
Acknowledgement:	No
Sensitive:	Not Sensitive
Message Expiration:	Undetermined
Urgency:	Undetermined
Delivery Time:	600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT **(ALT=Health Alert, ADV=Health Advisory, UPD=Health Update, MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages.

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

	Actual:	Communication or alert refers to a live event
	Exercise:	Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
	Test:	Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

Message Type:

	Alert:	Indicates an original Alert
	Update:	Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
	Cancel:	Indicates prior alert has been cancelled

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of "Update" or "Cancel", this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. "n/a" = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).