

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

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MEMORANDUM**TO: HOSPITALS and HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS****RE: Updates for obtaining Diphtheria Antitoxin**

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of the procedure for obtaining diphtheria antitoxin.

Ontario has obtained a small supply of antitoxin from a manufacturer in Croatia through the federal Special Access Program (SAP).

The risk of indigenously acquired diphtheria in Ontario is extremely low. Since 1990, there has been only one case of toxigenic diphtheria reported. However, the disease has resurfaced in the early 1990's and in 2004 in former USSR states, where immunization programs were inadequate.

Diphtheria is a Reportable Disease in Ontario under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and must be reported immediately to the local medical officer of health by telephone. The disease should be reported even if it is only suspected and has not yet been confirmed by laboratory testing. A comprehensive case history should be obtained to support the diagnosis.

A laboratory requisition accompanying the specimens **must be fully completed and must specify the suspect diagnosis of diphtheria**, to ensure the appropriate testing is conducted. The laboratory should be notified as soon as diphtheria is suspected.

Please see the attached ***Diphtheria Antitoxin Fact Sheet for Healthcare Professionals*** in Ontario, which outlines the procedure to obtain the diphtheria antitoxin.

For the management of cases and close contacts please refer to the *Guidelines for the Control of Diphtheria in Canada* published in the Canada Communicable Disease Report – Supplement Vol. 24 S3 July 1998 and available online at the Public Health Agency of Canada website at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/98vol24/24s3/index.html>

For dosage and administration of the diphtheria antitoxin, please refer to the product monograph found on the manufacturer's website at: <http://www.imz.hr/DAT-eng.pdf>

As the antitoxin is being provided through the federal SAP, the *Future Use Request Form* must be completed by the attending physician and faxed to the Public Health Protection & Prevention Branch, Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at 416-327-7439 to the attention of Sharon Dolman, as soon as possible after the initiation of the antitoxin. The form will be included with the diphtheria antitoxin, but may also be obtained from the SAP's website at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/acces/drugs-droques/sapf2_pasf2-eng.php

The Therapeutic Products Directorate has advised that practitioners considering the use of diphtheria antitoxin should be aware of the following:

- Institute of Immunology in Croatia has not sought marketing approval for this product in Canada;
- Biologics and Genetic Therapies Directorate (BGTD) has not had an opportunity to evaluate its safety, efficacy or quality;
- SAP authorization does not constitute an opinion or statement that a drug is safe, efficacious or of high quality; and
- SAP does not conduct a comprehensive evaluation to ensure the validity of drug information or attestations of the manufacturer respecting safety, efficacy and quality.

The medical officer of health for your jurisdiction will also receive this information and related material. If you have any questions, please contact your local public health unit.

Original signed by Dr. David C. Williams

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Attachments