

To: Infectious Diseases, Critical Care Physicians, All Prescribers, Nursing, Pharmacy

From: Carina Desramaux - Pharmacy Manager

Date: September 2, 2021

RE: Tocilizumab critical supply and fixed dose

Pharmacy has just been informed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) that all formats of tocilizumab will be on backorder starting November-December 2021. Over the next 4 months Ontario could receive only 100 to 200 x 400 mg vials.

Due to this impending national shortage, provinces have been asked to reinstate prescribing **tocilizumab as a single, fixed dose of 400 mg IV**, when tocilizumab is indicated for the treatment of COVID-19. The Ontario Science Advisory Table is aligned to this approach in order to conserve critical supply.

Ordering of tocilizumab for COVID-19 treatment remains **restricted to Infectious Diseases (primary) and Critical Care physicians.**

Two (2) Physicians are required to agree on tocilizumab treatment for a patient prior to initiation of therapy. Infectious Disease Physician must be one of the approvers when available. When unavailable, two Critical Care Physicians may order. Treatment will be **delayed** until second approval is received and documented.

Tocilizumab is recommended for moderately to critically ill adult patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 pneumonia who are **on optimal concomitant steroid therapy** according to the following eligibility criteria (based on Ontario Science Advisory Table):

Critically ill:

- Hospitalized patients requiring ventilatory and/or circulatory support including high-flow nasal cannula, higher concentrations of oxygen by mask, CPAP, non-invasive ventilation, or invasive mechanical ventilation; **AND** are on optimal dexamethasone therapy; **AND** are within 14 days of hospital admission (or within 14 days of a new COVID-19 diagnosis if nosocomially acquired).

Moderately ill:

- Hospitalized patients newly requiring low-flow supplemental oxygen with a C-reactive protein level of at least 75 mg/L **AND** have evidence of disease progression (i.e. increasing oxygen or ventilatory requirements) despite 24-48 hours of optimal dexamethasone therapy; **AND** are within 14 days of hospital admission (or within 14 days of a new COVID-19 diagnosis if nosocomially acquired).

Pharmacy will continue to communicate tocilizumab supply updates to Infectious Diseases and Critical Care physicians, and will inform prescribers of any National and Provincial supply updates.

Please refer to Ontario Science Advisory Table link below and TBRHSC's tocilizumab parenteral manual for additional information.

Please contact pharmacy if any questions.

Thank you
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References:

1. ON COVID-19 Science Advisory Table April 19, 2021 Brief: Strategies to Manage Tocilizumab Supply During the COVID-19 Pandemic (<https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/strategies-to-manage-tocilizumab-supply-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>)