



Essential medications  
for high-quality  
patient care



# Essential medications – March 2021

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As part of the mission to end drug shortages, the Vizient team of pharmacy experts continues to identify essential medications where, if not available, would prove the greatest threat to hospitals' ability to provide immediate and high-quality patient care.

Medications identified as of greatest importance were selected by the Vizient pharmacy team from a comprehensive clinical review of products contained within the World Health Organization's (WHO) Essential Medicines list, the Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) algorithms, and medications included in Vizient member health systems' critical drug lists.

As of this edition, 8 drugs were added to the list creating a total of 234 line items, representing 226 unique drugs and three categories. This includes:

- **Acute treatment drugs with no alternatives (73 drugs)** – Medicines used in acute and critical circumstances to sustain life and for which there are no current alternatives
- **Chronic treatment drugs with no alternatives (30 drugs)** – Products used in chronic disease states or conditions where no alternatives are available (e.g., chemotherapy medications)
- **High impact drugs (130 drugs)** – Medicines for which alternatives are available but may be less clinically desirable and/or are more operationally difficult to use; also reflects drugs where the absence of one medication can affect therapeutically related drugs.

Updated quarterly, Vizient uses the identification of these essential medications to:

- Initiate sourcing strategies that prioritize production of these essential medications
- Continue efforts to advocate and endorse public policies that facilitate expanded supply and increased quality of the products contained within this database, and
- Focus its development of clinical mitigation strategies on medications that are classified as "essential."

At time of publication, more than 40% are available through Novaplus, the Vizient market-leading, private label program that includes a consistent supply of competitively priced medications for both inpatient and outpatient facilities. Novaplus is also a critical strategy in protecting Vizient health system and hospital members from drug shortages and the impact on resources and delivery of patient care.

In addition, more than 30% of the listed drugs are also on the ASHP drug shortage list, and 37 listed essential medications, representing 165 NDCs, are available through the Novaplus Enhanced Supply program. With commitment to additional production based on Vizient member historical purchases, this inventory program results in 66 million additional vials to the current inventory, driving both supplier resiliency and access to those critical, life-saving drugs through the ease of the full line wholesale channel, without any additional forms, fees or commitments.

The identification and recognition of these essential medications by our hospital members and clinical experts is another key action step Vizient takes to improve the resilience of supply. We remain committed to working with our members and other stakeholders to bring a permanent end to drug shortages.

Dan Kistner, Pharm.D  
Group Senior Vice President  
Vizient Pharmacy Solutions

## Essential Medications

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Acetaminophen oral <sup>a</sup>	●		
Acetaminophen rectal <sup>a</sup>	●		
Acetaminophen injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Acetylcysteine injection	●		
Acyclovir sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Adenosine injection	●		
Albumin human injection			●
Albuterol sulfate inhalation <sup>a</sup>			●
Allopurinol injection			●
Alprostadil injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Alteplase recombinant injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Amino acid injection		●	
Aminocaproic acid injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Aminophylline injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Amiodarone HCl injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Amoxicillin oral <sup>a</sup>			●
Amoxicillin/clavulanate potassium oral <sup>a</sup>			●
Amphotericin B lipid complex			●
Amphotericin B deoxycholate injection			●
Ampicillin injection <sup>a</sup>			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Ampicillin sodium/sulbactam sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Argatroban injection			●
Ascorbic acid injection	●		
Asparaginase ( <i>Erwinia</i> ) injection			●
Aspirin oral	●		
Atropine injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Atropine sulfate ophthalmic			●
Azathioprine sodium injection			●
Azithromycin injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Aztreonam injection			●
Bacteriostatic NS for injection			●
BCG vaccine injection		●	
Benznidazole oral			●
Bleomycin sulfate injection		●	
Bumetanide injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Bupivacaine HCl injection			●
Bupivacaine with Epi injection			●
Caffeine citrate injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Calcitonin-salmon injection	●		
Calcium chloride injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Calcium gluconate injection <sup>a</sup>			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Carboplatin injection		●	
Caspofungin acetate injection			●
Cefazolin sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Cefepime HCl injection			●
Cefotaxime sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Ceftaroline fosamil monoacetate injection			●
Ceftazidime injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Ceftriaxone sodium injection			●
Chlorothiazide sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Chromic chloride injection		●	
Ciprofloxacin HCl ophthalmic			●
Ciprofloxacin injection			●
Cisplatin injection		●	
Clindamycin phosphate injection	●		
Clobazam oral <sup>a</sup>	●		
Colistimethate sodium injection	●		
<b>Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy Solutions injection<sup>b</sup></b>	●		
Copper injection		●	
<i>Crotalidae</i> polyvalent immune FAB (ovine) injection			●
Cyclophosphamide injection		●	
Cyclosporine injection			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Cysteine HCl injection <sup>a</sup>		●	
Cytarabine conventional injection		●	
Dacarbazine injection		●	
Dactinomycin injection		●	
Dantrolene sodium injection	●		
Darbepoetin alfa injection			●
Daunorubicin HCl injection		●	
Deferoxamine mesylate injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Desflurane inhalation			●
Desmopressin acetate injection	●		
Dexamethasone sodium phosphate injection			●
Dexmedetomidine HCl injection			●
Dexrazoxane HCl injection		●	
Dextrose 50% in water <sup>a</sup>	●		
Diazepam injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Digestive enzymes oral <sup>a</sup>		●	
Digoxin immune fab (ovine) injection	●		
Diltiazem HCl injection			●
Diphenhydramine HCl injection	●		
Dobutamine HCl injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Dopamine HCl injection <sup>a</sup>			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Doxorubicin HCl conventional injection		●	
Doxycycline hyclate injection	●		
Edetate calcium disodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Enoxaparin sodium injection			●
Epinephrine inhalation (Racepinephrine) <sup>a</sup>			●
Epinephrine injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Epoetin alfa recombinant injection			●
Eptifibatid injection			●
Erythromycin ophthalmic <sup>a</sup>			●
Ethambutol HCl oral			●
Etomidate injection			●
Etoposide injection			●
Famotidine injection			●
Fat emulsion intravenous <sup>a</sup>	●		
Fentanyl citrate injection			●
Ferric gluconate complex injection			●
Filgrastim injection			●
Fluconazole injection			●
Fludrocortisone acetate oral		●	
Fluorescein sodium strips			●
Folic acid injection		●	

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
<b>Fosphenytoin Sodium injection<sup>a, b</sup></b>			●
Furosemide injection			●
Gentamicin sulfate injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Glucagon injection	●		
Glucarpidase injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Glycopyrrolate injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Haloperidol injection			●
Heparin Sodium injection			●
Hydrocortisone sodium succinate injection			●
Hydromorphone HCl injection			●
Hydroxocobalamin injection (Cyanokit)	●		
Hydroxyurea oral	●		
Ibuprofen injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Ibuprofen oral	●		
Ifosfamide injection		●	
Immune globulin (IVIG) injection	●		
Indomethacin injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Insulin regular (human) injection	●		
Ipratropium bromide inhalation <sup>a</sup>	●		
Isoflurane inhalation			●
Isoproterenol HCl injection			●



	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Ketamine HCl injection	●		
Labetalol HCl injection			●
Lacosamide injection			●
<b>Lactulose oral<sup>a, b</sup></b>			●
Leucovorin calcium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Levetiracetam injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Levofloxacin injection			●
Levothyroxine sodium (T4) injection	●		
Lidocaine hydrochloride injection			●
Lidocaine hydrochloride/ epinephine bitartrate injection <sup>b</sup>			●
Linezolid injection			●
Liothyronine sodium (T3) injection	●		
Lorazepam injection			●
Magnesium sulfate injection	●		
Manganese injection		●	
Mercaptopurine oral		●	
Meropenem injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Methadone HCl oral			●
Methotrexate injection	●		
Methylene blue injection	●		
Methylergonovine maleate injection			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Methylprednisolone sodium succinate Injection			●
Metoprolol tartrate injection			●
Metronidazole injection			●
<b>Micafungin Sodium injection<sup>b</sup></b>			●
Midazolam HCl injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Milrinone lactate injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Mitomycin injection		●	
Morphine sulfate injection			●
<b>Mycophenolate Mofetil HCl injection<sup>b</sup></b>			●
Naloxone HCl injection	●		
Nelarabine injection		●	
Neostigmine methylsulfate injection			●
Nicardipine HCl injection			●
Nitroglycerin injection			●
Nitroprusside sodium injection			●
Norepinephrine bitartrate injection			●
Octreotide acetate injection	●		
Ofloxacin ophthalmic			●
Ondansetron HCl injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Oxytocin injection	●		
Paclitaxel conventional injection		●	

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Pantoprazole sodium injection			●
Pegaspargase injection <sup>b</sup>		●	
Phenobarbital sodium injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Phentolamine meyslate injection	●		
Phenylephrine HCl injection	●		
Physostigmine salicylate injection	●		
Phytonadione (vitamin K) injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Piperacillin sodium/tazobactam sodium injection			●
Potassium acetate injection			●
Potassium chloride injection			●
Potassium iodide oral			●
Potassium phosphate injection			●
Prednisolone oral <sup>a</sup>			●
Propofol injection			●
Propranolol HCl injection			●
Propylthiouracil (PTU) oral	●		
Protamine sulfate injection	●		
Prothrombin complex concentrate (human) injection			●
Pyridoxine HCl (vitamin B6) injection	●		
Rabies IVIG injection	●		
Rabies vaccine injection	●		

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Rasburicase injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Remifentanyl HCl injection			●
Retepase recombinant injection			●
Rh <sub>0</sub> (D) immune globulin (RhoGam) injection	●		
Ribavirin inhalation	●		
Rocuronium bromide injection			●
Ropivacaine HCl injection			●
Selenium injection <sup>a</sup>		●	
Sevoflurane inhalation			●
<b>Sirolimus oral<sup>b</sup></b>			●
Sodium acetate injection			●
Sodium benzoate/sodium phenylacetate injection <sup>a</sup>	●		
Sodium bicarbonate injection	●		
Sodium chloride 0.9% IV	●		
Sodium chloride 23.4% IV	●		
Sodium chloride 3% IV <sup>a</sup>	●		
Sodium nitrite injection	●		
Sodium phosphate injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Sodium polystyrene sulfonate oral			●
Sodium thiosulfate injection	●		
Sterile water for injection (SWFI)			●

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Succimer (DMSO) oral <sup>a</sup>			●
Succinylcholine chloride injection			●
Sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim oral	●		
Surfactant, lung intratracheal <sup>a</sup>	●		
<b>Tacrolimus injection<sup>b</sup></b>			●
<b>Tacrolimus oral<sup>b</sup></b>			●
Tetanus immune globulin human injection			●
Thiamine (vitamin B1) injection	●		
Thrombin topical	●		
Tirofiban HCl injection			●
Tobramycin inhalation <sup>a</sup>	●		
Tocilizumab injection	●		
Tranexamic acid injection	●		
Uridine triacetate oral	●		
Valganciclovir HCl oral			●
Vancomycin HCl injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Vasopressin injection	●		
Vecuronium bromide injection <sup>a</sup>			●
Vinblastine sulfate injection		●	
Vincristine sulfate injection <sup>a</sup>		●	
Vitamin D analogs injection		●	

	Acute treatment drugs/ no alternative	Chronic treatment drugs/ no alternative	High impact
Voriconazole injection			●
Warfarin sodium oral			●
Zinc chloride injection <sup>a</sup>		●	
Zoledronic acid injection			●

Abbreviations: BCG = Bacillus Calmette–Guérin; DMSO = dimethyl sulfoxide; HCl = hydrochloride; IV = intravenous; IVIG = intravenous immunoglobulin; NS = normal saline

<sup>a</sup>Medications with a pediatric disproportionate impact

<sup>b</sup>Medications in boldface are new to the list

Any listing of drugs is not static and has the potential to change as new products enter the market and as clinical recommendations are revised. Patient populations also vary, so the specific therapies of greatest importance are based on provider need. Finally, this document is not intended to replace other critical drug lists, such as those related to disaster preparedness circumstances. This is intended to identify and provide context to those molecules whose absence presents the greatest ongoing threat to routine patient care requirements.

To learn more details about Vizient Pharmacy Solutions and the **Novaplus Enhanced Supply program**, go to [www.vizientinc.com](http://www.vizientinc.com) or email: [pharmacyquestions@vizientinc.com](mailto:pharmacyquestions@vizientinc.com).