

READ THE FINE PRINT. IT'S NO SMALL MATTER WITH PRODUCT LABELS.

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF ALBERTA JULY 3, 2014

[INFECTIOUS PREVENTION AND CONTROL, MESSENGER LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Important instructions can sometimes 'hide' in the small print of product labeling:

Discard unused portion 3 days after initial use.

– Xylocaine (2% lidocaine hydrochloride)

No antimicrobial agent or other substance has been added. Single use container.

– 0.9% sodium chloride irrigation

What's not small are the consequences of improper use, which can put your patients' safety at risk — and make you liable. So always read the fine print and follow these Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) best practices for single and multi-dose products:

Single-Dose/Single-Use Products

(e.g., medications, irrigation solutions, sterile lubricants)

Single-dose/single-use products lower the risk of microbial contamination. For these products, it is important to use only in a single patient for a single case/procedure/injection:

- **Never save or re-use, even on the same patient**, as these products typically lack antimicrobial preservatives.
- **Select the smallest volumes necessary for your needs to limit waste/costs.** Avoid vials containing more product than is necessary for a single patient/procedure.
- **Discard an opened product immediately after initial use.**
- **Discard unopened products as per the manufacturer's expiry date.**
- **If a vial is not sterile or you are not sure, discard it.**

Multi-Dose Vials

(e.g., xylocaine/lidocaine)

Although IPC prefers single-dose/single-use vials and products, multi-dose vials are acceptable if you follow these safe injection practices:

- **Keep vial clean.** Prevent inadvertent contamination through direct or indirect contact with surfaces or equipment.
- **Date all products after opening.**
- **Be aware of both the 'expiry' date and the 'beyond-use' date,** and discard products based on these dates.
 - The manufacturer prints an expiry date on the vial. You should never use a product past the expiry date (opened or unopened).
 - The beyond-use date is the time frame an open bottle will stay good (e.g., 3 days, 28 days). It is the user's responsibility to date the vial after opening and to discard the rest after the specified time frame (or after the expiry date, whichever comes first).
- **If there is no specified expiry or beyond-use date, discard products 28 days after opening.**
- **If a vial is not sterile or you are not sure, discard it.**

For more information contact the College's IPAC Program Coordinator at Benjamin.Kung@cpsa.ab.ca or 780-969-5004.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2011. Website FAQs.

What do you have to say on this topic? Leave a comment below.