

April 1, 2020

**COM-2020-022**

Dear provider of pharmaceutical services,

As the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to evolve, providers of pharmaceutical services have an important role in the front lines of this global public health issue. We want to thank you for every effort taken by your team to continue to provide essential services to our communities. Know that we are committed to support you and keep you informed regarding rapidly changing measures taken in response to COVID-19.

As you may know, washing hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds is one of the most important prevention methods to stop the spread of COVID-19. When soap and water are not available, the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) recommends the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol. However, appropriate use is important to assure effectiveness and safety of hand sanitizer. For this reason below is a review of recommendations on how to effectively and safely use hand sanitizers, which may also be used to educate patients on the appropriate use of hand sanitizer.

**HAND SANITIZERS ARE DRUGS**

The FDA regulates hand sanitizers as over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

**Effective use of hand sanitizer:**

- Alcohol in hand sanitizer works best when hand sanitizer is rubbed all over the hands, making sure to get it between fingers and on the back of the hands.
- Hand sanitizer must not be wiped or rinsed off before it is dry.
- Hand sanitizer is not to be used if the hands are visibly dirty or greasy; in such cases, hands must be washed with soap and water instead.

**Safe use of hand sanitizer:**

- When using alcohol-based hand-sanitizers, it is important to read the Drug Facts label, particularly the warnings section.
- Hand sanitizer must be stored out of the reach of pets and children, and children should use it only with adult supervision.
- Hand sanitizer must not be ingested.
- Although hand sanitizer might be hard to find during this COVID-19 public health emergency, the FDA does not recommend that consumers make their own hand sanitizer at home because, if made incorrectly, homemade hand sanitizer can be ineffective and/or dangerous (e.g. skin burns have been reported after the use of homemade hand sanitizer). However, the FDA is helping increase the availability of hand sanitizers by working with companies and pharmacies to address this supply shortage.



- For additional information regarding FDA's guidance for the temporary preparation of hand sanitizers by certain pharmacists and other companies during the COVID-19 public health emergency, visit: <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-temporary-policy-preparation-certain-alcohol-based-hand-sanitizer-products-during>

Additional information can be found at the websites from the CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA; [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)).

The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic is dynamic and constantly changing. We strongly encourage the frequent revision of updated information provided by the FDA, the CDC, and the World Health Organization (WHO), to assure that your practices are consistent with the most actualized information.

On PharmPix we are committed to the health and wellness of our members. It is our priority to offer high quality services and support practices for health promotion and diseases prevention. If you have any questions or wish to have more information regarding this document, you can call us at 787-522-5252, extension 137.

Regards,

Clinical Department

References:

1. When and How to Wash Your Hands | Handwashing | CDC. (2020). Retrieved March 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
2. Safely Using Hand Sanitizer. (2020). Retrieved March 2020, from [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/safely-using-hand-sanitizer?utm\\_campaign=CU%20Safely%20Using%20Hand%20Sanitizer&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Eloqua](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/safely-using-hand-sanitizer?utm_campaign=CU%20Safely%20Using%20Hand%20Sanitizer&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua)

