



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DONALD E. WILLIAMSON, M.D. • STATE HEALTH OFFICER

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND TRAUMA
WILLIAM E. CRAWFORD, M.D. • STATE EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alabama Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Providers

FROM: William Crawford, M.D., State EMS Medical Director

DATE: February 5, 2014

SUBJECT: Shortage of Normal Saline

It has come to the attention of the Alabama Department of Public Health/Office of Emergency Medical Services (ADPH/OEMS) that a nationwide shortage of Normal Saline is affecting the ability of EMS Providers in Alabama to obtain Normal Saline.

While this shortage lasts, the following procedures should be followed:

- Conserve Normal Saline supplies when possible and use only when truly indicated according to the State of Alabama EMS Patient Care Protocols
- Use a saline lock when possible
- You may administer one of the following IV solutions when Normal Saline is unavailable. The fluids are listed in order of preference:
 - Lactated Ringers (LR)
 - Dextrose 5% Normal Saline (D5 NS)
 - Dextrose 5% Lactated Ringers (D5 LR)
 - ½ Normal Saline (1/2 NS)
 - Dextrose 5% ½ Normal Saline (D5 ½ NS)
- When administering ½ Normal Saline or Dextrose 5% ½ Normal Saline care should be taken to avoid volume overload with these relatively hypotonic solutions
- When administering Dextrose containing solutions, care should be taken to avoid excessive Dextrose administration in diabetic patients