

## Important: Valsartan Drug Recall

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration recently recalled several drugs that include valsartan as an active ingredient. This recall is due to an impurity, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), which was found in the recalled drugs. NDMA is classified as a substance that could cause cancer based on lab test results. The presence of NDMA is thought to be related to changes in the way the active substance was manufactured.

### Drugs Recalled

Below is a list of drugs and drug manufacturers involved in the recall.

Drug	Manufacturers
Valsartan	Major Pharmaceuticals
Valsartan	Solco Healthcare
Valsartan	Teva Pharmaceuticals or Actavis
Valsartan/Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ)	Solco Healthcare
Valsartan/Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ)	Teva Pharmaceuticals or Actavis

The recall has created a shortage of the drugs listed above and many pharmacies are already out of the drugs. However, we want to let you know that our BlueMedicare<sup>SM</sup> formulary includes a number of generic Angiotensin II Antagonist drugs you can prescribe as an alternative. In addition, we added **Olmesartan** to our BlueMedicare formulary as another low-cost alternative to help your patients avoid any interruptions in their drug therapy.

### Drug Alternatives

Our BlueMedicare formulary includes the following list of no-cost, low-cost Angiotensin II Antagonist drugs. Please contact your affected Florida Blue Medicare patients to discuss the valsartan recall issue and prescribe them a drug from the list below.

Olmesartan	Olmesartan w/Hydrochlorothiazide
Candesartan	Candesartan w/Hydrochlorothiazide
Irbesartan	Irbesartan w/Hydrochlorothiazide
Losartan	Losartan w/Hydrochlorothiazide
Telmisartan	Telmisartan w/Hydrochlorothiazide

Note: We recommend writing a prescription for a 90-day supply of one of the no-cost, low-cost drug alternatives on the list above.

### Additional Information for You and Your Patients

A letter was sent to affected Florida Blue Medicare members about the valsartan recall instructing them to:

- Look for the drug and drug manufacturer's name on the prescription bottle label to determine if they're taking one of the recalled drugs.
- Contact their pharmacist or doctor about switching to another drug if they are taking one of the recalled drugs.
- Continue to take their medication until they discuss options with their doctor.

- Contact their pharmacy for help if they can't find the information on their prescription bottle.
- Talk to their pharmacist or doctor or visit the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's website at [fda.gov](http://fda.gov) if they have questions about the recall. They can also call Florida Blue at the number on the back of their pharmacy card.

If you need more information about the valsartan drug recall, please visit the U. S. Food & Drug Administration website at [fda.gov/drugs](http://fda.gov/drugs).

We encourage you to prescribe a valsartan alternative to your patients for their health and safety.