



THYROID FLYER

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Thyroid Therapies

Editorial

By Gail Pascoe

Welcome to this edition of *Thyroid Flyer*. In our last issue we told you of our move into our new office in Mt Waverley. We have made the big move, which involved the packing and relocation of nearly five years of history and files – this was no small task – and I extend my special thanks to all on the Board who worked incredibly hard to bring this about. A special thank you for the extra help from the Stevens family and friends.

Now with our office up and operational we need urgent help to keep it running and enable us to expand our services to our members. Our office opening hours vary from week to week, depending on the assistance available. Fortnightly, we are open two days and the alternate weeks three days. We need people to answer the phones and also perform administrative duties, such as receipting memberships, sending packs to new members, helping prepare the mailings of our *Flyer* – a broad variety of things that need helpers. Alun Stevens has set up a very simplified computer system for managing many of these tasks, so your computer skills don't need to be expert. If you can't manage the computer work, that's OK, taking messages, preparing the post, just stuffing envelopes and adding stamps is OK and is a task that has to be done. If you can assist us, even a half day a fortnight or month, please volunteer. It will greatly assist us help more people with thyroid problems and it is personally greatly rewarding. We already have the services of a wonderful group of ladies who work in the office, so come and join in fun and become part of Thyroid Australia.

You may have heard about some changes to the storage of Oroxine and Eutroxig by Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

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Taking Care Of Thyroxine

By Gregory W. Roberts

Summary

Some of the pharmaceutical properties of thyroxine have important implications for the quality use of medicines. The stability of thyroxine tablets is limited and they may reach the expiry date before the bottle is finished. Administration should preferably be on an empty stomach and be consistent with respect to food and other drugs. The long half-life of thyroxine enables longer dosing intervals of up to a week if required. The two Australian brands of thyroxine are identical and patients can swap brands safely, but this should not be assumed for overseas brands.

Introduction

Thyroxine tablets are important in managing hypothyroidism, but treatment may be sub-optimal if they are used incorrectly. The tablets have pharmaceutical properties which can impair the patients management. Discussing the correct use and storage of the tablets is an important part of prescribing thyroxine.

Availability

Synthetic preparations of thyroxine contain the *laevo* isomer of thyroxine, usually as the sodium salt. There are two brands of thyroxine available in Australia, each as 50 microgram, 100 microgram and 200 microgram tablets (pack size 200) with five repeats on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Parenteral preparations of thyroid hormone [*Preparations that are not administered by mouth*] have little use in Australia, outside of specialist centres.

The two Australian brands are marketed by Sigma and one of its subsidiaries. They are identical products so patients can swap them safely, but this assumption should **not** be extended to overseas brands.

Stability

Thyroxine is stable in dry air, but unstable in the presence of light, heat and humidity. In some cases overseas, thyroxine tablets have been unstable even at room temperature, and storage temperatures of 8°C to 15°C were required to maintain potency. In the USA, the Food and Drug Administration has determined that stability and potency problems with oral thyroxine preparations could potentially have adverse effects on health. It is therefore very important that thyroxine tablets should be kept in their original container and stored out of sunlight in a cool dry place.¹

The expiry date for Australian manufactured thyroxine tablets is one year from the date of manufacture. There are 200 tablets in a bottle, so it is possible that patients on half tablet doses will not finish the bottle before the stock expires. The expiry date should be emphasised to the patient to ensure they do not continue taking a thyroxine preparation that may be waning in potency. However, stock with a shelf-life of 18 months will soon be available. This formulation will require refrigeration at all times.

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PUBLIC
MEETINGS**

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THYROID AUSTRALIA

MEMBER BENEFITS

Full access to Thyroid Flyer is restricted to paid up members of Thyroid Australia.

Thyroid Australia's services are funded by membership fees and donations from individual members of the public.

Membership is not expensive and your money goes towards the costs of maintaining and hosting this site, staffing our office, producing our newsletter and researching thyroid problems and treatments.

Please visit the About Us section of our web site for details of how you can join Thyroid Australia and help us help others just like you.