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## News letter - on making the difference.

*On Drug Shortages -are we going backwards and why ?*

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### 1. More than 200 drugs in critical short supply -

We like to think that, here in the United States, if we are or a family member is seriously ill, and there's a drug to treat the illness, that drug will be readily available. Now we know, however, that we can't depend on that. According to a report, more than 200 drugs are in short supply, and 82 percent of hospitals surveyed say drug shortages have forced them to delay treatments. [Cbsnews.com](http://CBSnews.com)

3. Drug Shortages—"Currently there are about 246 drugs that are in short supply, a record high. These shortages are not just a result of accident, error or unusual circumstance, the number of drugs in short supply has risen steadily since 2006. The shortages arise from a combination of systematic factors, among them the policies of the FDA. The FDA has inadvertently caused drugs long-used in the United States to be withdrawn from the market and its "Good Manufacturing Practice" rules have gummed up the drug production process and raised costs [marginalrevolution.com](http://marginalrevolution.com)

5. Drug Shortages Distress Hospitals "The supply of these drugs has tightened in recent years as the generic-drug industry has consolidated, with many of the drugs now made by just one or two companies. In many cases patents have long expired and the original brand-name drug is no longer being produced. " [wsj.com](http://wsj.com)

7. U.S. Scrambling to Ease Shortage of Vital Medicine "The proposed solutions, which include a national stockpile of cancer medicines and a non-profit company that will import drugs and eventually make them, are still in the early or planning stages. But the sense of alarm is widespread. " [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

8 Cancer drug shortages threaten to derail hundreds of clinical trials - "All those drug shortage reports you've been seeing recently are taking a heavy toll on drug developers. Testifying recently to Congress, HHS's Assistant Secretary for Health Howard Koh said that the sudden supply interruption has derailed or delayed hundreds of clinical trials around the country, threatening to impede a new wave of oncology treatments." [fiercebitech.com](http://fiercebitech.com)

### 2. No Easy Fix for Drug Shortage Crisis -

According to the FDA, there were 178 drug shortages reported last year, and even more so far in 2011. Edward Cox, coordinator of the drug shortage program at FDA, noted that in 2010:

- 54% of the shortages were due to quality or manufacturing issues.
- 21% were due to delays and capacity issues.
- 11% due to discontinuations.
- 5% due to raw material issues.

[medpagetoday.com](http://medpagetoday.com)

### 4. The Shortage of Vital Drugs -

"The shortages are forcing health care providers to buy more expensive products in the absence of cheap generics. Unscrupulous wholesalers have made matters worse by scooping up scarce drugs and offering them to hospitals at markups that often reach 20 times the normal price or more, according to a recent survey." [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

### 6. J&J's Doxil woes show shortages aren't easily fixed-

If only drugs followed the rules of Economics 101. Then, when supplies dropped, prices would rise, inspiring more suppliers to get into the game. But for a variety of very basic reasons--regulation being just one--drug shortages aren't so easy to fix. Pharmaceuticals aren't widgets. Making them is complicated. Getting geared up to do so takes time, and so does amping up existing production.

### 9. Genzyme apologizes for latest Fabrazyme delay"

Genzyme has fallen short on shipments again. ...the company did not distribute its Fabry disease drug in August, after promising patients in July that Fabrazyme would be forthcoming. In an apologetic letter to patients, released by the FDA, Genzyme blamed the lack of Fabrazyme supply on an "unexpected delay related to our quality release process." [fiercebitech.com](http://fiercebitech.com)