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Important Announcement: Market Removal of All Ranitidine Products

Dear Kaiser Permanente Member,

You may be affected by a recent announcement about the medication ranitidine (also known as Zantac). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) asked all manufacturers of ranitidine to stop manufacturing and selling these products. All forms of prescription and over-the-counter ranitidine will no longer be available in the U.S. If you currently have a supply of ranitidine, here is what you need to know about this announcement.

Why is the FDA removing all ranitidine medications from the market?

- The FDA has learned that an impurity found in ranitidine can increase even when the medication is stored correctly in your home. If the medication is stored at higher than normal temperatures, the amount of impurity can increase even faster.
- The impurity known as *NDMA* is a probable carcinogen (which means it may cause cancer).

What should I do with my medication?

- You may continue to take your ranitidine prescription until you are able to pick up an alternative medication. Once you find an alternative, you should discard all ranitidine products.
- Famotidine (also known as Pepcid) and cimetidine (Tagamet) are medications that work in the same way as ranitidine. These medications are sold over-the-counter (OTC) and are available in pharmacies, grocery stores, and convenience stores. Your local pharmacist can recommend a dose of famotidine or cimetidine that will be equal to the dose of ranitidine you are taking.
- Unfortunately, because ranitidine is no longer available, famotidine and cimetidine availability may be low due to an increase in demand.
- A different class of medications called *proton pump inhibitors* may also be an option for you. These medications can be purchased without a prescription and include esomeprazole (Nexium 24HR), lansoprazole (Prevacid 24HR), and omeprazole (Prilosec OTC). Long-term use of these drugs has been linked to safety problems (e.g., increased risk of broken bones, certain infections; and memory, heart, and kidney problems).
- Please read the Drug Facts on the packaging of your OTC medication carefully since it contains important information about the drug including specific warnings.

If you have any questions about which treatment option is best for you, please contact your primary care provider or the pharmacy where you normally get your prescriptions filled. The pharmacy's phone number is found on the prescription label.

Sincerely, Kaiser Permanente, National Pharmacy Operations