

## **M.2 Deletion of halothane and M.2a Retention of halothane until 2027**

MSF strongly supports the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists' proposal for a stepwise phasing out of halothane, retaining halothane in the 2025 WHO Model Lists of Essential Medicines (EMLs) and scheduling its deletion in 2027.

In 2023, MSF supported the inclusion of sevoflurane in the EMLs, as an inhalational gas. In 2023, MSF has included sevoflurane in its own Standard List and started phasing out the use of halothane. Halothane had been the standard inhalational agent supplied to MSF missions for many years, because of its relatively low cost and the familiarity of anaesthesia providers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) with this inhalational agent. This is no longer justifiable due to the availability of safer, affordable and less environmentally harmful alternatives, like sevoflurane.

MSF has made significant progress in phasing out halothane and introducing sevoflurane into clinical practice. The ongoing transition has been implemented in a relatively smooth manner. MSF's structured approach has facilitated a more uniform adoption of alternatives to halothane in all missions, while reducing the use of halothane. Despite the overall success, some challenges remain as MSF continues to work towards completing this transition in anesthetic practices.

Based on this experience, MSF agrees with the WFSA's assessment on the need for a stepwise approach to avoid unintended supply issues for healthcare providers in LMICs.

MSF would like to emphasize to the 25th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines, the necessity to consider the appropriate amount of time required for the following actions:

- Efforts to ensure access to and maintenance of quality, specifically calibrated vaporizers for sevoflurane.
- Advocacy for a wider availability of monitoring and absorption systems.
- Proactive information and sensitization of relevant manufacturers, healthcare providers and Ministries of Health to support the transition to halothane alternatives.

Considering all these elements, MSF supports the recommendation that the 25th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines consider postponing the deletion of halothane from the WHO Model Lists of Essential Medicines until 2027.

  


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