



NATIONAL PBM BULLETIN

November 1, 2006

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC HEALTHCARE GROUP,
MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL, AND
CENTER FOR MEDICATION SAFETY PSCI (VA MEDSAFE)

LOOK-ALIKE SAFETY ALERT REGARDING FLUARIX® AND TWINRIX®

I. ISSUE

FLUARIX® is an influenza virus vaccine used for prophylaxis manufactured by Glaxo Smith Kline (Figure 1). TWINRIX® is a hepatitis A inactivated and hepatitis B recombinant vaccine used for prophylaxis that is also manufactured by Glaxo Smith Kline (Figure 2). Both products utilize the Tip-Lok technology, which consists of single-dose, pre-filled, pre-labeled syringes. The plastic and cellophane packagings used on these two products are identical. One difference between their appearance lies in that Twinrix® has a blue band at the bottom of the syringe, while Fluarix® does not.

II. VA MEDSAFE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Staff must be informed of potential look-alike confusion between FLUARIX® and TWINRIX®.
2. Pharmacy must store FLUARIX® and TWINRIX® in separate areas in the pharmacy.
3. Pharmacy must create a warning system for staff to notify of potential look-alike confusion between FLUARIX® and TWINRIX® (i.e., computer alerts during the ordering/verifying process and/or warning stickers on packaging).
4. Drug/syringe used must be verified with the name of the drug on the prescription.

III. SOURCE

VISN 8 Safety Alert Report.

Figure 1. FLUARIX®



Figure 2. TWINRIX®

