

[Isoflurane](#)

Essential medicine status

Section:

[1. Anaesthetics, preoperative medicines and medical gases 1.1. General anaesthetics and oxygen 1.1.1. General anaesthetics and oxygen > Inhalational medicines](#)

ATC codes: [N01AB06](#)

EMLc

Indication

Anaesthetics and therapeutic gases ICD11 code: [XM1880792884](#)

INN

Isoflurane

Medicine type

Gas

List type

Core

Formulations

Respiratory > Inhalation > liquid:

EML status history

First added in 2011 ([TRS 965](#))

Sex

All

Age

Also recommended for children

Therapeutic alternatives

The recommendation is for this specific medicine

Patent information

Patents have expired in most jurisdictions

Read more [about patents.](#)

Wikipedia

[Isoflurane](#)

DrugBank

[Isoflurane](#)

Summary of evidence and Expert Committee recommendations

Isoflurane was added to the core list of the EML and EMLc as an inhalational anaesthetic in 2011. The Committee reviewed the evidence on inhalational anaesthetics. Currently halothane (square box) and nitrous oxide are the only inhalational anaesthetics on the EML. Halothane is widely used in both induction and maintenance, in adults and children but has been gradually replaced in developed countries by isoflurane, enflurane, desflurane, and sevoflurane for safety reasons. Ensuring availability of halothane is increasingly problematic in many settings. None of these medicines is best in all situations and the choice is determined by the availability of the medicines and specific vaporizers. The Committee decided to include isoflurane but not enflurane (due to the risks of convulsions) or sevoflurane (due to cost). Halothane should remain, but without a square box, as this would not be listed as the exemplar of all inhalation agents. Where available, halothane provides an affordable option for induction and maintenance. However, where availability is an issue, isoflurane provides an acceptable option for maintenance.