



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Gentamicin

Pharmacy: Royal Liverpool Hospital and
Broadgreen Hospital

PIF 1595 V2

What is Gentamicin used for?

Gentamicin belongs to a group of antibiotics known as “aminoglycosides”. Gentamicin is used to treat serious bacterial infections including those of the urinary tract (e.g. kidneys or bladder), chest (e.g. lungs) and blood (e.g. bacteraemia or septicaemia).

How is gentamicin given?

Gentamicin is given into a vein; it can be given either as a slow injection or more commonly by a short infusion (drip). For this reason gentamicin will be given to you by doctors and nurses in hospital. The dose of Gentamicin given to you will depend on how serious the infection is, your age, body weight and how well your kidneys are working.

What problems could I experience with gentamicin?

Like all medicines, gentamicin may occasionally cause problems. gentamicin can occasionally cause damage to the ears, which may show itself as feeling dizzy or difficulty in keeping your balance, a ringing in your ears (tinnitus) or hearing loss.

In some cases these effects may be irreversible.

Gentamicin can also cause damage to your kidneys - this is usually reversible and we will monitor your kidney function closely with blood tests. Treatment will be stopped if there is any evidence of Kidney damage. It is difficult to calculate the risk of this effect happening for different patients.

What is known is that the risk increases if your kidneys do not work very well or you are over 65 years old.

What can be done to reduce the chance of this happening?

If you are at risk of developing these problems we would ideally try to avoid using gentamicin to treat you. However, in some serious infections this may not be possible. In this situation your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with you.

The amount of gentamicin in your blood will be measured regularly to check that the correct blood levels have been achieved. Your doctor will also carry out blood tests to check your kidney function before and during treatment with gentamicin.

If you are taking water tablets (“diuretics”) such as furosemide, your doctor may ask you to temporarily stop taking them while you are being treated with gentamicin. This is because they may increase the risk of gentamicin causing damage to your ears.

Is there anything that I can do?

It is important that you tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including over the counter medications or herbal remedies, because Gentamicin and other medicines you may be taking can sometimes affect each others action.

Who can I speak to if I have any questions?

The doctors looking after you will be happy to answer any questions you may have. You can also ask to speak to one of the pharmacists or nurses looking after you.

It is extremely important that you tell your doctor or nurse if you experience any problems such as difficulty keeping your balance, dizziness, a ringing in your ears or hearing loss.

Further Information Medicines information

Tel: 0151 706 2096

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2096

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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