



Oral Vancomycin Information Sheet

- Oral vancomycin is one of the medicines used to treat Clostridium difficile Infection (CDI) and should be used in line with local guidance. The Antibiotic Guidelines for NHS Salford are available on the intranet – please contact the Medicines Management Team for more information.
- **Vancomycin capsules should be used first instead of liquid.**
- **If the patient cannot take vancomycin capsules and needs oral liquid, this should be reconstituted from the injection.**
- *The patient must have been assessed by a registered doctor, nurse, pharmacist or speech and language therapist to establish that he/she is unable to take vancomycin capsules and therefore requires a liquid preparation.*
- A vancomycin liquid preparation is not available commercially and so has to be made up by a specials manufacturer or by reconstituting the injection for oral use. The delay in vancomycin liquid specially manufactured and then supplied by the pharmacy cannot be afforded in patients with CDI. Also, the specially manufactured liquid only has a shelf life of up to 14 days and so cannot be held as stock either by the community pharmacies or the hospital. It is also considerably more expensive than the reconstituted injection.
- **Therefore if the patient cannot take vancomycin capsules and needs oral liquid, this should be reconstituted from the injection.** Vancomycin injection is licensed for oral use.
- (Please note: The vancomycin capsules are difficult to open and the contents are gel-formed and so they are not suitable for administration to a patient who needs oral liquid, e.g. via a feeding tube.)

Procedure for the Preparation and Administration of Vancomycin 500mg Injection for ORAL use

- The preparation of vancomycin injection for oral use must only be undertaken by a registered nurse or doctor.
- Only use the vancomycin 500mg vials for oral use. 1g vials should only be used when it is not possible to obtain this strength, e.g. following a manufacturer's problem.
- Please note: Compliance with National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) Patient Safety Alert 19: *Promoting safer measurement and administration of liquid medicines via oral and other enteral routes* must be maintained in that only oral/enteral syringes that cannot be connected to intravenous catheters or ports must be used to measure and administer the dose of vancomycin liquid. Intravenous syringes must NOT be used to measure or administer oral liquid medicines.

- Check the vial to be reconstituted to ensure:
 - It is in date.
 - There is nothing visible in the powder.
 - It is the 500mg strength vial.
- Add 10ml of water for injection to the vial containing 500mg vancomycin hydrochloride powder. This gives a solution with a strength of 50mg/ml. (Similarly, if a 1g vial is being used, add 20 ml of water for injection.)
- Once reconstituted the vancomycin forms a clear solution. If this is not the case the vial should be discarded.
- For a dose of 125mg vancomycin, draw up 2.5ml of solution. This must be placed into a small clean cup and the IV syringe and needle disposed of as per the Waste Management Policy.
- An ORAL syringe must then be used to draw up the vancomycin liquid from the plastic cup and the dosage of 2.5ml should be re-checked. This can then be administered to the patient.
- The dose may be diluted in 30ml of drinking water and given to the patient to drink or administered via a nasogastric tube. This stage is not compulsory but may be helpful in administering the dose because oral vancomycin has an offensive taste. This stage is advisable if administering via a nasogastric tube.
- The following information must be included on the reconstituted vial:
 - Date of preparation
 - Time of preparation
 - Patient's name
 - For ORAL use only – this must be clearly highlighted.
- The reconstituted injection can be stored for up to 24 hours in the fridge.
- If the patient is on a dose of vancomycin 125mg four times a day then one 500mg vial is equivalent to one day's treatment, but the date and time of preparation must be checked each time a dose is given to a patient to ensure it hasn't expired.
- When administering from a pre-prepared vial:
 - The above procedure must be followed.
 - The patient's name should be checked.
 - The date and time of preparation should be checked to ensure the vancomycin liquid has not expired.

Please consult the NHS Salford Medicines Management Team for further information.

References:

- *The NEWT Guidelines* Second Edition, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (Eastern Division) (previously North East Wales NHS Trust) May 2010
- *Handbook of Drug Administration via Enteral Feeding Tubes*, Pharmaceutical Press 2007
- *Procedure for the Preparation and Administration of Vancomycin 500mg Injection for ORAL USE in Oxfordshire Community Hospitals*, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust June 2009
- Vancomycin SPC, Wockhardt UK Ltd (last accessed 19th April 2011)
- Vancomycin SPC, Hospira UK Ltd (last accessed 19th April 2011)