Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Vancomycin

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Firvanq; Tyzavan; Vancocin

Brand Names: Canada

JAMP Vancomycin; JAMP-Vancomycin; PMS-Vancomycin; PMSC-Vancomycin [DSC]; Vancocin; Vancomycin HCl

Warning

Injection:

- Some products are not for use during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy. These products contain other things that may cause harm to the unborn baby. If you are pregnant, talk with your doctor.

What is this drug used for?

Capsules and oral solution:

- It is used to treat certain types of bowel infections. This includes an infection called C diff.

Injection:

- It is used to treat or prevent bacterial infections.
- If taken by mouth, some products can be used to treat certain types of bowel infections. This includes C diff.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Kidney problems like kidney failure have happened with this drug. Tell your doctor if you have ever had kidney problems.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- You may need to have hearing tests while you use this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not use longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side

effects.

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

Injection:

- This drug is not approved for injection into the eye. Eye problems, including long-lasting loss of eyesight, have happened when this drug was given into the eye.
- If you are able to get pregnant, your doctor may have you take a pregnancy test before starting this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- This drug may cause hearing loss that may not go away. The chance may be higher if you use this drug for a long time. Do not use this drug longer than you have been told by your doctor. Tell your doctor right away if you have a change in hearing or hearing loss.
- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and other serious

reactions. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in your mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever; chills; body aches; shortness of breath; or swollen glands.

Capsules and oral solution:

- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.

Injection (if given in the vein):

- Fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Pain when passing urine.
- Change in balance.
- Flushing.
- During the infusion, a rash on the face, neck, trunk, and arms.
- Some health problems may happen when this drug is given too fast. This includes shortness of breath or wheezing, itching, muscle pain, chest pain, and signs of low blood pressure like dizziness or passing out. Tell your doctor right away if you have any of these signs.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.
- Diarrhea is common with antibiotics. Rarely, a severe form called C diff–associated diarrhea (CDAD) may happen. Sometimes, this has led to a deadly bowel problem. CDAD may happen during or a few months after

taking antibiotics. Call your doctor right away if you have stomach pain, cramps, or very loose, watery, or bloody stools. Check with your doctor before treating diarrhea.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All products:

- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.

Capsules and oral solution:

- Gas.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Back pain.
- Headache.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Capsules:

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Oral solution:

- Your pharmacist will need to mix this drug before you get it.
- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If the solution looks hazy or has particles in it, do not use it. Call the doctor or pharmacist to find out what to do.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.
- If needed, this form of this drug may be given by mouth or through a feeding tube instead of as an injection.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Capsules and oral solution:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Capsules:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Oral solution:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Protect from light.
- Keep lid tightly closed.
- Throw away any part not used after 14 days.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any

questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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