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 your child is pregnant, talk with your child's 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 the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

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

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Kidney problems like kidney failure have happened with this drug. Tell your child's doctor if your child has ever had kidney problems.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- Your child may need to have hearing tests while using this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child 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 your child is of childbearing age, a pregnancy test may need to be done before starting this drug to show that your child is NOT pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 this drug is used for a long time. Do not give this drug to your child for longer than you have been told by the doctor. Tell the doctor right away if your child has 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 your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in the 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 child's doctor right away if your child has any of these signs.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your child's nurse if your child has any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your child's body.
- Diarrhea is common with antibiotics. Sometimes, diarrhea may be caused by a certain bowel infection (C diff). C diff may happen during treatment or within a few months after the last dose. This infection can be severe

or even deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has stomach cramps, fever, long-lasting diarrhea, very loose or watery stools, or bloody stools. Check with your child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child 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 child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health

agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Capsules:

- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels 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 giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels 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 my child misses a dose?

Capsules and oral solution:

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

Injection:

- Call your child's 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 child's 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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.

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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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