



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Vancomycin

This information from Lexicomp® 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; Vancocin HCl; Vancosol Pack [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

Vancocin; Vancomycin Hydrochloride for Injection

Warning

Injection:

- Some injection products are not for use during 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 to make sure your child's product may be used during pregnancy.

What is this drug used for?

Injection:

- It is used to treat or prevent bacterial infections.

All oral products:

- It is used to treat diarrhea caused by a bacterial infection called C diff.
- It is used to treat a type of bowel infection.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby.

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 for your child to take this drug with all of his/her 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 blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with 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.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.

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, your child's doctor may have your child take a pregnancy test before starting this drug to show that she 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.
- Flushing.
- Pain when passing urine.
- 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.

Injection:

- Fever or chills.
- Sore throat.
- Change in balance.
- 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.
- It is common to have diarrhea when taking antibiotics. Rarely, a severe form of diarrhea called C diff-associated diarrhea (CDAD) may happen. Sometimes, this has led to a deadly bowel problem (colitis). CDAD may happen while your child is taking an antibiotic or within a few months after he/she stops taking it. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has stomach pain or cramps, very loose or watery stools, or bloody stools. Do not try to treat diarrhea without first checking with the doctor.

All oral products:

- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.

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:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.

All oral products:

- 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.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

All oral products:

- Give this drug with or without food.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.
- 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.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

All oral products:

- 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.

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

Capsules:

- Store at room temperature.
- Store 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.
- Be sure you know how long you can store this drug before you need to throw it away.

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.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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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This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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

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