

## VANCOMYCIN

*Vancomycin 500mg & 1000mg for injection*



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### What is in this leaflet

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This leaflet answers some common questions about Vancomycin. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you being given this medicine against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about being given this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

**Keep this leaflet.** You may need to read it again.

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### What VANCOMYCIN is used for

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This medicine is used to treat severe infections caused by bacteria, such as:

- staphylococcal infections (including methicillin resistant staphylococci )
- endocarditis (an infection of the lining of the heart)
- osteomyelitis (bone infection)
- pneumonia (lung infection)
- septicaemia (infection of the blood)
- infections of the skin or the skin structure
- enterocolitis (infection in the intestines).

This medicine belongs to a group of medicines called glycopeptide antibiotics.

**Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why this medicine has been prescribed for you.** Your doctor may have prescribed it for another reason.

This medicine is not addictive.

This medicine is available only with a doctor's prescription.

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### Before you are given VANCOMYCIN

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#### *When you must not be given it*

**You must not be given VANCOMYCIN if you have an allergy to:**

- any medicine containing VANCOMYCIN
- any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body; rash, itching or hives on the skin.

If you are not sure whether you should be given this medicine, talk to your doctor.

#### *Before you are given it*

Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any other medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.

Tell your doctor if you have or have had any of the following medical conditions:

- kidney problems
- hearing problems
- inflammatory bowel disorders.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant or are breast-feeding.

Your doctor can discuss with you the risks and benefits involved.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell them before you are given VANCOMYCIN.

### ***Taking other medicines***

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

VANCOMYCIN may interfere some medicines.

These include:

- some other medicines used to treat infections, such as amikacin, amphotericin, colistin, gentamicin, neomycin and tobramycin
- cisplatin, an anticancer medicine
- some fluid tablets (diuretics), such as ethacrynic acid and frusemide
- anaesthetic agents
- cholestyramine, a powder taken to lower cholesterol levels
- suxamethonium or vecuronium, medicines used to relax muscles.

These medicines may be affected by VANCOMYCIN, or may affect how well it works. You may need different amounts of your medicine, or you may need to take different medicines.

Your doctor and pharmacist may have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while you are being given this medicine.

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## **How VANCOMYCIN is given**

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### ***How much is given***

Your doctor will decide what dose of VANCOMYCIN you will receive and how long you will receive it for. This depends on your condition and other factors, such as your weight and kidney function.

### ***How it is given***

VANCOMYCIN is usually given as a slow injection into a vein (intravenous drip). VANCOMYCIN Hydrochloride for Intravenous Infusion must only be given by a doctor or nurse.

Sometimes, VANCOMYCIN is taken orally (swallowed). VANCOMYCIN may be diluted with water and flavoured with syrup (as it has an unpleasant taste) and given as a drink.

### ***Overdose***

As VANCOMYCIN is usually given to you in hospital under the supervision of your doctor, it is very unlikely that you will receive an overdose.

**However, if you experience severe side effects after being given VANCOMYCIN, tell your doctor or nurse immediately.**

Symptoms of a VANCOMYCIN overdose may include the side effects listed below in the 'Side Effects' section, but are usually of a more severe nature.

**Immediately contact your doctor or the National Poisons Information Centre (0800 POISON or 0800 764 766) or go to the Emergency department at your nearest hospital, if you think that you may have been given or had too much, or if anyone else has taken any VANCOMYCIN by mistake. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning. You may need urgent medical attention. Take the container of VANCOMYCIN with you if you can.**

**Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns.**

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## **While you are being treated with VANCOMYCIN**

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### ***Things you must do***

**If you are about to be started on any new medicine, remind your doctor and pharmacist that you are being given VANCOMYCIN.**

**Tell any other doctors, dentists, and pharmacists who treat you that you are being given this medicine.**

**If you are going to have surgery, tell the surgeon or anaesthetist that you are being given this medicine. It may affect other medicines used during surgery.**

**If you become pregnant soon after being given VANCOMYCIN, tell your doctor.**

### ***Things to be careful of***

**Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how VANCOMYCIN affects you.** This medicine may cause dizziness in some people. If this occurs, do not drive, operate machinery or do anything else that could be dangerous. If you drink alcohol, dizziness may be worse.

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## **Side effects**

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**Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are being treated with VANCOMYCIN.** This medicine helps most people with certain serious infections, but it may have unwanted side effects in a few people. All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical attention if you get some of the side effects.

If you are over 65 years of age you may have an increased chance of getting side effects.

**Do not be alarmed by the following lists of side effects.** You may not experience any of them.

**Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.**

**Tell your doctor or nurse if you notice any of the following and they worry you:**

- irritation at the injection site
- nausea, vomiting or mild diarrhoea
- dizziness.

The above list includes side effects that are usually mild and short lived.

**Tell your doctor or nurse immediately if you notice any of the following:**

- signs of an allergic reaction, such as shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body; rash, itching or hives on the skin
- chills or fever, which may be accompanied by shivering
- flushing of the upper body or pain and muscle spasm of the chest and back
- fast or irregular heart beat
- ringing in the ears or hearing loss
- other infections
- bruising.

The above list includes serious side effects that may require medical attention. Serious side effects are rare.

### ***After finishing it***

**Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following side effects, particularly if they occur several weeks after stopping treatment with VANCOMYCIN:**

- severe abdominal cramps or stomach cramps
- watery and severe diarrhoea which may also be bloody
- fever, in combination with one or both of the above.

These are serious side effects. You may have a serious condition affecting your bowel. Therefore, you may need urgent medical attention. However, these side effects are rare.

**Tell your doctor or nurse if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.** Other side effects not listed above may occur in some patients. Some of these side effects (for example changes in kidney function) can only be found when your doctor does tests from time to time to check your progress.

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## **After using VANCOMYCIN**

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### ***Storage***

VANCOMYCIN will be stored in the pharmacy or on the ward. The injection is kept in a cool dry place, protected from light, where the temperature stays below 25 deg C.

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## **Product description**

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### ***What it looks like***

VANCOMYCIN (as hydrochloride), powder for Infusion comes as a white to off white powder in a glass vial. When reconstituted with sterile water for injection, it forms a clear solution.

### ***Ingredients***

Active ingredients:

- VANCOMYCIN hydrochloride.

VANCOMYCIN (as hydrochloride), powder for Infusion does not contain lactose, sucrose, gluten, tartrazine or any other azo dyes.

### ***Who supplies this medicine***

Distributed in New Zealand by:

Mylan New Zealand Ltd  
PO Box 11183  
Ellerslie  
Auckland

Telephone: (09) 579 2792

### ***Date of information***

2 February 2009

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