PENTASA
mesalazine

Presentation
Prolonged release tablet 500mg: white grey to pale brown speckled round tablet with a break-mark. Embossed 500mg on one side, PENTASA on the other side, and containing 500mg mesalazine.

Prolonged release tablet 1g: white-grey to pale brown, speckled, oval tablet. Embossed on both sides with PENTASA and containing 1g mesalazine.

Enema: a white to slightly yellow suspension containing 10mg/mL mesalazine in purified water with a pH value between 4.4 and 5.0. Added buffering agents result is a slightly acidic suspension. Sodium metabisulphite is added as an antioxidant.

Suppository: a white to light tan spotted oblong compressed suppository, average weight 1580mg, 1cm diameter and 2.8cm long. Contains 1g mesalazine.

Granules, prolonged-release: white-grey to pale white brown cylindrical shaped granules, containing 1g, 2g or 4g mesalazine.

Uses

Actions
Pharmacotherapeutic group: Intestinal anti-inflammatory agents (A07 EC02).

Mechanism of action and pharmacodynamic effects
It has been established that mesalazine is the active component of sulfasalazine, which is used for the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease.

Based on clinical results, the therapeutic value of mesalazine after oral as well as rectal administration appears to be due to local effect on the inflamed intestinal tissue, rather than to systemic effect.

Increased leucocyte migration, abnormal cytokine production, increased production of arachidonic acid metabolites, particularly leukotriene B4, and increased free radical formation in the inflamed intestinal tissue are all present in patients with IBD. Mesalazine has in vitro and in vivo pharmacological effects that inhibit leucocyte chemotaxis, decrease cytokine and leukotriene production, and scavenge for free radicals. It is currently unknown which, if any, of these mechanisms play a predominant role in the clinical efficacy of mesalazine.

The risk of colorectal cancer (CRC) is increased in ulcerative colitis, especially in patients with extensive disease, with a disease course >8 years, with a first-degree family history of CRC, or with comorbid primary sclerosing cholangitis. The risk for colitis-associated CRC has been estimated to be 2% at 10 years, 8% at 20 years, and 18% at 30 years after onset of ulcerative colitis.

Observed effects of mesalazine in experimental models and patient biopsies support the role of mesalazine in prevention of colitis-associated CRC, with downregulation of both
inflammation dependent and non-inflammation dependent signalling pathways involved in the development of colitis-associated CRC.

Pharmacokinetics

General characteristics of the active substance

Disposition and local availability
The therapeutic activity of mesalazine most likely depends on a local contact of the medicine with the diseased area of the intestinal mucosa.

PENTASA prolonged-release granules and tablets consist of ethylcellulose-coated microgranules of mesalazine. Following administration and tablet disintegration mesalazine is continuously released from the individual microgranules throughout the gastrointestinal tract in any enteral pH conditions.

The microgranules enter the duodenum within an hour of administration, independent of food co-administration. The average small intestinal transit time is approximately 3-4 hours in healthy volunteers.

PENTASA suppositories and enemas are designed to provide the distal part of the intestinal tract with high concentrations of mesalazine and a low systemic absorption. Suppositories cover the rectum, whereas enemas have been shown to reach and cover the descending colon.

Biotransformation
Mesalazine is metabolised both pre-systemically by the intestinal mucosa and systemically in the liver to N-acetyl-mesalazine (acetyl-mesalazine). Some acetylation also occurs through the action of colonic bacteria. The acetylation seems to be independent of the acetylator phenotype of the patient.

Acetyl-mesalazine is thought to be clinically inactive, but this still remains to be confirmed.

Absorption
Based on urine recovery data in healthy volunteers, 30-50% of the ingested dose is absorbed following oral administration, predominantly from the small intestine.

Mesalazine is detectable in plasma 15 minutes following administration. Maximum plasma concentrations are seen 1-4 hours post-dose. After a gradual decrease, mesalazine will no longer be detectable 12 hours post-dose. The plasma concentration curve for acetyl-mesalazine follows the same pattern, but the concentrations are generally higher and the elimination is slower.

The metabolic ratio of acetyl-mesalazine to mesalazine in plasma after oral administration ranges from 3.5 to 1.3 after daily doses of 500mgx3 and 2gx3, respectively, implying a dose-dependent acetylation, which may be subject to saturation.

Mean steady-state plasma concentrations of mesalazine are approximately 2µmol/l, 8µmol/l and 12µmol/l after 1.5g, 4g and 6g daily dosages, respectively. For acetyl-mesalazine the corresponding concentrations are 6µmol/l, 13µmol/l and 16µmol/l.
The transit and release of mesalazine after oral administration are independent of food co-administration, whereas the systemic absorption is reduced.

The absorption following rectal administration is low, and depends on the dose, the formulation and the extent of spread. Based on urine recoveries in healthy volunteers under steady-state conditions given a daily dose of 2g (1g x 2), approximately 10% of the dose is absorbed after administration of suppositories whereas about 15-20% is absorbed after administration of enemas.

**Distribution**
Protein binding of mesalazine is approximately 50% and of acetyl-mesalazine about 80%.

**Elimination**
After intravenous administration the plasma half-life of mesalazine is approximately 40 minutes and for acetyl-mesalazine approximately 70 minutes. Due to the continuous release of mesalazine from PENTASA throughout the gastrointestinal tract, the elimination half-life cannot be determined after oral administration. However, steady-state is reached after a treatment period of 5 days following oral administration.

Both substances are excreted with the urine and faeces. The urinary excretion consists mainly of acetyl-mesalazine.

**Characteristics in patients**
The delivery of mesalazine to the intestinal mucosa after oral administration is only slightly affected by pathophysiologic changes such as diarrhoea and increased bowel acidity observed during active inflammatory bowel disease. A reduction in systemic absorption to 20-25% of the daily dose has been observed in patients with accelerated intestinal transit. Likewise, a corresponding increase in faecal excretion has been seen.

The systemic absorption following administration of PENTASA enemas has been shown to be significantly decreased in patients with active ulcerative colitis as compared to those in remission.

In patients with impaired liver and kidney functions, the resultant decrease in the rate of elimination and increased systemic concentration of mesalazine may constitute an increased risk of nephrotoxic adverse reactions.

**Preclinical safety data**
Toxic renal effects have been demonstrated in all species tested. Rat and monkey dosages and plasma concentrations at the No Observed Adverse Effect Levels (NOAELs) exceed those used in humans by a factor of 2-7.2.

No significant toxicity associated with the gastrointestinal tract, liver or haematopoietic system in animals has been observed.

*In vitro* test systems and *in vivo* studies showed no evidence of mutagenic or clastogenic effects. Studies of the tumourigenic potential carried out in mice and rats showed no evidence of any substance-related increase in the incidence of tumours.

Animal studies on oral mesalazine do not indicate direct or indirect harmful effects with respect to fertility, pregnancy, embryo-fetal development, parturition or postnatal development.
Mesalazine is deemed not to pose a risk to the environment at the doses prescribed for use in patients.

**Indications**

**Prolonged release tablets 500mg and 1g, and granules 1g, 2g and 4g:**
Treatment of mild to moderate ulcerative colitis or Crohn’s disease.

**Enemas:**
Treatment of ulcerative proctosigmoiditis and left-sided colitis.

**Suppositories:**
Treatment of ulcerative proctitis.

**Dosage and Administration**

**Prolonged Release Tablets 500mg and 1g/Prolonged Release Granules 1g, 2g, 4g**

**Ulcerative colitis**

_Treatment of active disease:_
Adults: Individual dosage, up to 4g once daily or in divided doses.
Children: Individual dosage, starting with 20-30mg/kg bodyweight daily in divided doses.

_Maintenance treatment:_
Adults: Recommended dosage, 2g once daily.
Children: Individual dosage, starting with 20-30mg/kg bodyweight daily in divided doses.

**Crohn’s disease**

_Treatment of active disease:_
Adults: Individual dosage, up to 4g daily in divided doses.
Children: Individual dosage, starting with 20-30mg/kg bodyweight daily in divided doses.

_Maintenance treatment:_
Adults: Individual dosage, up to 4g daily in divided doses.
Children: Individual dosage, starting with 20-30mg/kg bodyweight daily in divided doses.

There is only limited documentation for effect in children.

PENTASA tablets or granules must not be chewed. To facilitate swallowing, the tablets may be dispersed in 50ml of cold water. Stir and drink immediately. The contents of the PENTASA granules sachet should be emptied onto the tongue and washed down with some water or orange juice.

**Enema**
Adults: 1g mesalazine (100ml enema) at bedtime for 2-3 weeks.
Children: Reduced dose based on body weight. Generally, 10-20mg/kg body weight per day. Topical treatment can also be administered as maintenance treatment.
Suppository
1 suppository 1-2 times daily.

There is little experience and only limited documentation for an effect in children.

NOTE: A visit to the toilet is recommended before administration of enemas and suppositories. See separate instructions for use.

Shake the enema container well before use. The enema is protected by an aluminium foil bag and should be used immediately after opening of the bag.

Contraindications
Hypersensitivity to mesalazine, any other component of the product, or salicylates. Severe liver and/or renal impairment.

Warnings and Precautions
Most patients who are intolerant or hypersensitive to sulfasalazine are able to take PENTASA without risk of similar reactions. However, caution is recommended when treating patients allergic to sulphasalazine (risk of allergy to salicylates). In case of acute intolerance reactions such as abdominal cramps, acute abdominal pain, fever, severe headache and rash, therapy should be discontinued immediately.

Caution is recommended in patients with impaired liver function. Liver function parameters like ALT or AST should be assessed prior to and during treatment, at the discretion of the treating physician.

The medicine is not recommended for use in patients with renal impairment. The renal function should be regularly monitored (e.g. serum creatinine), especially during the initial phase of treatment. Urinary status (dip sticks) should be determined prior to and during treatment at the discretion of the treating physician. Mesalazine-induced nephrotoxicity should be suspected in patients developing renal dysfunction during treatment. The concurrent use of other known nephrotoxic agents should increase monitoring frequency of renal function.

Patients with pulmonary disease, in particular asthma, should be very carefully monitored during a course of treatment.

Mesalazine-induced cardiac hypersensitivity reactions (myo- and pericarditis) have been reported rarely. Serious blood dyscrasias have been reported very rarely with mesalazine. Blood test for differential blood count is recommended prior to and during treatment, at the discretion of the treating physician. Concomitant treatment with mesalazine can increase the risk of blood dyscrasia in patients receiving azathioprine or 6-mercaptopurine or thioguanine. Treatment should be discontinued on suspicion or evidence of these adverse reactions.

As a guideline, follow-up tests are recommended 14 days after commencement of treatment, then a further two to three tests at intervals of 4 weeks. If the findings are normal, follow-up tests should be carried out every three months. If additional symptoms occur, these tests should be performed immediately.
Fertility, pregnancy and lactation
PENTASA should be used with caution during pregnancy and lactation and only if the potential benefits outweigh the possible hazards in the opinion of the physician.

Use in Pregnancy (Category C)
Mesalazine is known to cross the placental barrier and its concentration in umbilical cord plasma is lower than the concentration in maternal plasma. The metabolite acetyl-mesalazine is found at similar concentrations in umbilical cord and maternal plasma. Animal studies on oral mesalazine do not indicate direct or indirect harmful effects with respect to pregnancy, embryo-foetal development, parturition or postnatal development. Blood disorders (pancytopenia, leucopenia, thrombocytopenia, anaemia) have been reported in newborns of mothers being treated with PENTASA.

In one single case after long-term use of a high dose of mesalazine (2-4 g, orally) during pregnancy, renal failure in a neonate was reported.

Use in Lactation
Mesalazine is excreted in breast milk. The mesalazine concentration in breast milk is lower than in maternal blood, whereas the metabolite - acetyl-mesalazine - appears in similar or increased concentrations. There is limited experience of the use of oral mesalazine in lactating women. No controlled studies with PENTASA during breast-feeding have been carried out. Hypersensitivity reactions like diarrhoea in the infant cannot be excluded. If the infant develops diarrhoea, breast-feeding should be discontinued.

Animal data on mesalazine show no effect on male and female fertility.

Effects On Ability To Drive And Use Machines
Treatment with PENTASA is unlikely to affect the ability to drive and/or use machines.

Adverse Effects
The most frequent adverse reactions seen in clinical trials are diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal pain, headache, vomiting and rash. Hypersensitivity reactions and drug fever may occasionally occur.

Following rectal administration local reactions such as pruritus, rectal discomfort and urge may occur.
### Frequency of adverse effects, based on clinical trials and reports from post-marketing surveillance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MedDRA Organ Class</th>
<th>Common (1-10%)</th>
<th>Rare (0.01-0.1%)</th>
<th>Very rare (&lt;0.01%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blood and the lymphatic system disorders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blood disorders such as: Altered blood counts (Anemia, aplastic anemia, agranulocytosis, neutropenia), leukopenia (including granulocytopenia), pancytopenia, thrombocytopenia, and Eosinophilia (as part of an allergic reaction)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Immune system disorders</strong></td>
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<td>Pancolitis Hypersensitivity reaction including allergic exanthema, anaphylactic reaction, Drug reaction with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms (DRESS), erythema multiforme, and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS), Drug Fever</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nervous system disorders</strong></td>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Peripheral neuropathy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cardiac disorders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Myo* and pericarditis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respiratory, thoracic and mediastenal disorders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allergic alveolitis, allergic and fibrotic lung reactions (including dyspnoea, coughing, bronchospasm, pulmonary eosinophilia, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary infiltration, pneumonitis)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gastrointestinal disorders</strong></td>
<td>Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, flatulence</td>
<td>Increased amylase, acute pancreatitis*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hepato-biliary disorders</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased liver enzymes, cholestasis parameters and bilirubin, hepatotoxicity (incl. hepatitis*, cholestatic hepatitis, cirrhosis, hepatic failure)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders</strong></td>
<td>Rash (incl. urticaria, erythematous rash)</td>
<td>Alopecia</td>
<td>Reversible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musculoskeletal, connective tissue and bone disorders</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Myalgia, arthralgia, lupus erythematosus-like reactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Renal and urinary disorders
Renal function impairment (incl. acute and chronic interstitial nephritis*, nephrotic syndrome, renal insufficiency), urine discoulouration

Reproductive system disorders
oligospermia (reversible)

General disorders and administration site conditions
Abdominal distension (only with rectal form), Anal discomfort, irritation at the application site, Pruritis, tenesmus (only with rectal form)

(*) The mechanism of mesalazine-induced myo- and pericarditis, pancreatitis, nephritis and hepatitis is unknown, but it might be of allergic origin.

It is important to note that several of these disorders can also be attributed to the inflammatory bowel disease itself.

Interactions
Combination therapy with PENTASA and azathioprine, or 6-mercaptopurine or thioguanine have in several studies shown a higher frequency of myelosuppressive effects, and an interaction seems to exist, however, the mechanism behind the interaction is not fully established. Regular monitoring of white blood cells is recommended and dosage regime of thiopurines should be adjusted accordingly.

There is weak evidence that mesalazine might decrease the anticoagulant effect of warfarin.

Overdosage
Acute experience in animals
Single oral doses of mesalazine up to 5g/kg in pigs or a single intravenous dose of mesalazine at 920mg/kg in rats were not lethal.

Human experience
There is limited clinical experience with overdose of PENTASA which do not indicate renal or hepatic toxicity. There is no specific antidote and treatment is symptomatic and supportive. There have been reports of patients taking daily doses of 8 grams for a month without any adverse events.

Management of overdose in man

Pharmaceutical Precautions
Store below 25°C. Keep in original container, protected from light.
**Medicine Classification**
Prescription Medicine.

**Package Quantities**
PENTASA prolonged release tablets 500mg double aluminium foil blisters of 10 tablets - boxes of 10 strips.

PENTASA prolonged release tablets 1g double aluminium foil blisters of 10 tablets - boxes of 60 tablets and 120 tablets.

PENTASA prolonged-release granules 1g – 100 or 120 individually packed sachets of aluminium foil.

PENTASA prolonged-release granules 2g – 10 or 60 individually packed sachets of aluminium foil.

PENTASA prolonged-release granules 4g – 30 individually packed sachets of aluminium foil.

PENTASA enemas 10mg/mL – polyethylene bottles with a tip with a valve for rectal application. The bottles are supplied in nitrogen-filled aluminium foil bags. 100mL, boxes of 7x100mL.

PENTASA enema starter kit – 1 x 100mL bottle.

PENTASA suppositories 1g - double aluminium foil blisters packs of 28s or 30s.

PENTASA suppositories 1g – starter pack 2 x 1g suppositories.

Not all strengths of these products are currently available in New Zealand.

**Instructions For Use/Handling**
The enemas are protected by an aluminium foil bag and should be used immediately after opening.

A visit to the toilet is recommended before administration of suppositories and enemas. See separate instructions for use.

**Further Information**

**Incompatibilities**
None known.

**List of excipients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prolonged-release tablets 500mg; 1g:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active ingredient: mesalazine 500mg or 1g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-medicinal ingredients: magnesium stearate, talc, ethylcellulose, povidone, microcrystalline cellulose</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Prolonged-release granules 1g, 2g and 4g:**
- **Active ingredient:** mesalazine 1g, 2g or 4g
- **Non-medicinal ingredients:** ethylcellulose, povidone

**Suppositories:**
- **Active ingredient:** mesalazine 1g
- **Non-medicinal ingredients:** magnesium stearate, talc, povidone, macrogol 6000

**Enemas:**
- **Active ingredient:** mesalazine 10mg/ml
- **Non-medicinal ingredients:** disodium edetate, sodium metabisulphite, sodium acetate, purified water, hydrochloric acid for pH adjustment

**Chemical formula:** C₇H₇NO₃
**Molecular weight:** 153.13
**Structural formula:** 5-aminosalicylic acid

**Name and Address**
PHARMACO (NZ) LTD
P O Box 4079
AUCKLAND
Telephone (09) 377-3336

**Date of Preparation**
8 December 2015

(CCDS Oct 2015)