

# GENTAMICIN

**Other names:**



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why are you taking this medication

Gentamicin is an antibiotic that kills bacteria. It is effective against many (but not all) infections. This medicine may be used for serious infections, where other antibiotics would not work as well.

## When to take this medication

Gentamicin does not work if it is taken orally (as a tablet or capsule). It only works if it is injected into muscle (IM) or a vein (IV).

Gentamicin may already be prepared by the Hospital Pharmacy or will be prepared by a District Nurse. The injection is contained in a bag and is designed to drip slowly into your catheter (this is called an infusion). This should be administered exactly as you have been instructed at the hospital or clinic. The infusion should be given over at least 30 minutes. Your dose (how much and how often) depends on how bad your infection is, your weight and your kidney function. You may require periodic blood tests to determine the correct dose of gentamicin for you.

## Side effects

Some people are allergic to gentamicin: this would have showed up in the hospital or clinic.

Contact your backup service or see your doctor **immediately** if the following occur:

- skin rash, itching or fever
- dizziness or vertigo
- visual or hearing disturbances
- severe or long lasting diarrhoea

Also, contact your backup service or doctor if you are, or think you might be pregnant.

If used at high doses or for long periods of time, gentamicin can damage the kidneys and hearing (this is why the dose is checked through blood tests).

## Other medication

When taken with **frusemide, bumetanide, cyclosporin** and some drugs used to treat cancer, gentamicin is more likely to cause damage to your kidneys and hearing.

## Storage

Remember to keep your medication out of reach of children

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**