

# VANCOMYCIN

**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

Vancomycin is an antibiotic that kills bacteria. It is effective against many (but not all) infections. This medicine is used to treat septicaemia (blood infection), bone, joint and some other serious infections where other antibiotics would not work as well.

## When to take this medication

Vancomycin does not work if it is taken orally (as a tablet or capsule) for the infection you are being treated for. It only works if it is injected into a vein (IV).

Vancomycin 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. This infusion should be given over at least 60 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 ensure you are not receiving too much drug.

## Side effects

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

Milder side effects include:

- nausea
- dizziness
- pain and inflammation at the injection site during the infusion

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

- skin rash or itching
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- fever, chills or a sore throat
- tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or other hearing disturbances

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

If used at high doses or for long periods of time, vancomycin can damage the kidneys and hearing (this is why you may have periodic tests).

## Other medication

When taken with **frusemide, bumetanide, cyclosporin** and some drugs used to treat cancer, vancomycin 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.**