

Nebulised Colomycin®

This leaflet provides information about the use of an antibiotic called Colomycin® via a nebuliser to treat chronic respiratory (chest) infections. A nebuliser is a device that helps you to breathe in a medicine as a mist through a mask or a mouthpiece. The leaflet will remind you how to set up your nebulised Colomycin® so you can take it safely at home.

Why do I need Colomycin® through a nebuliser?

Nebulisers are used to convert liquid medicines into fine droplets that can be inhaled directly into the lungs. The use of nebulised antibiotics including Colomycin® (colistimethate sodium) is of benefit in chronic respiratory infections. Regular use can improve lung function, decrease time spent in hospital and reduce the need for other antibiotics. Nebulising the drug means it can treat the infection in the lungs directly and is much less likely to cause unwanted side effects.

You will be shown in clinic how to set up the nebuliser and prepare the solution to go into this and the nurses will explain any possible side effects of the medication.

Equipment needed

- Colomycin® 2 mega-unit vial (known as the 'drug' or 'medicine').
- Sodium chloride 0.9% ('normal saline') in 5ml plastic ampoules, known as the 'diluent' is used to dilute the Colomycin® powder.
- Nebuliser (including compressor, pot, tubing and mouthpiece).

Instructions

Before you start, it is important to remember that the Colomycin® should be nebulised in a **well-ventilated room**, without any other people or pets present, if possible. We will supply you with a nebuliser mask that prevents other people breathing in the medication.

1. Wash and dry your hands and assemble all necessary equipment.
2. Gently tap the Colomycin® vial on a hard surface to loosen the powder inside.
3. Flip up the plastic cap from the Colomycin® vial.
4. Remove foil seal by carefully ripping it away from the side of the vial. This should all come off in a single piece.
5. Remove the coloured bung from the vial.
6. Twist the plastic cap off the sodium chloride 0.9% ampoule and with the 5ml syringe draw the liquid up and put 4mls into one vial of 2 mega-units Colomycin® or 6mls into two vials of 1 mega-unit Colomycin® (3mls in each vial). You can make up two doses of medication – putting one in the fridge for the evening dose. You will waste some sodium chloride 0.9% solution. Discard the syringe, needle and empty vials into the yellow bin provided.
7. Replace the bung and swirl gently to mix. **Avoid shaking the vial to prevent excessive frothing.** Either rotate gently between hands or leave to stand until the medication settles.



- When settled, draw the medication back into the syringe and place into the nebulising pot. Turn on the compressor and use nebuliser as directed.

Other useful information

- Preparing Colomycin®:** When the Colomycin® powder is mixed with the diluents it is normal for the mixture to look hazy. It may also be frothy, especially if shaken, so avoid shaking it. Some people may use a mixture of normal saline and water for injections to mix their Colomycin® rather than just normal saline. If you have been told to use your medicine in this way, please continue to do so. Also, there may be times where you are required to use two 1 mega-unit vials instead of a single 2 mega-unit vial. If this is the case, please ask for specific advice using the contact numbers below.
If two vials of Colomycin® are mixed, these must be stored in the fridge and used within 24 hours of preparation.
- Side effects:** Sometimes, Colomycin® can lead to unwanted effects such as coughing, bronchospasm (tight feeling in the chest) and a sore throat or mouth. On rare occasions, it can also cause a rash. If you develop a rash, contact your doctor before taking any further doses.
If you experience any unwanted or worrying side effects, stop taking the nebulised Colomycin® and contact your doctor.
- Further supplies:** Although treatment is usually started in hospital, it will be your GP who will be responsible for providing prescriptions for Colomycin®. However, the consumables, i.e. needle disposal bin, blunt needles and syringes will be supplied by the Respiratory Department for the duration of your treatment. When the needle disposal bin is full, you can take it to the Respiratory Department, who will supply a new one.
You can take your prescription to any pharmacy for dispensing. Using plastic vials of the diluent(s) means that you will not need to use a syringe and needle. If you receive glass vials, or have any other problems in this respect, please contact us using the details below.
- Cleaning:** Your nebuliser chamber should be cleaned after each use. This can be done with warm water and left to air dry or put in a dishwasher. The chamber also needs to be sterilised once a week. This can be done using sterilising tablets / solution in a container saved for this purpose only or by boiling in a clean saucepan with two drops of washing up liquid. If you are a cystic fibrosis patient using an eflow® nebuliser, the nurses will provide you with specific information about cleaning.

Contacting us

Clinical Admin Team (CAT 11) or email rbb-tr.cat11@nhs.net

Respiratory Medicine, Tel: 0118 322 6676

Information based upon a leaflet by Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Respiratory Medicine Department, August 2023

Next review due: July 2025

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