

AMPHOTERICIN B

Other NAMES: Fungizone®, Amphotericin B Lipid Complex (Abelcet®), Liposomal Amphotericin B (AmBisome®)

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Amphotericin B is effective for the treatment of serious fungal infections due to *Cryptococcus neoformans*, *Candida albicans*, *Histoplasma capsulatum*, *Coccidioides immitis* and *Aspergillus fumigatus*. These severe fungal infections can invade the mouth, throat, esophagus, brain, blood, lung, liver, etc.

HOW should this drug be taken?

Amphotericin B is given intravenously (injected directly into your body through one of the veins) over a 2 to 6 hour period. To make sure that you can tolerate this drug, your doctor will prescribe a small test dose and monitor your response. If you tolerate the drug well, the dose will be slowly increased to the appropriate recommended dose.

Three forms of amphotericin B exist. The conventional or standard type of amphotericin B (Fungizone®) is usually prescribed. However, if you have kidney problems, if you cannot tolerate Fungizone®, or if Fungizone® is not effective for you, your doctor might prescribe one of the other two forms, Abelcet® or AmBisome®. These drugs still consist of amphotericin B, however amphotericin B in these drugs is linked to a fatty substance, a lipid-like structure.

The dose prescribed will depend on the infection that is being treated and will also

depend on the type of amphotericin B that is prescribed.

Your dosage is:

Amphotericin B (Fungizone®)
Amphotericin B lipid complex (Abelcet®)
Liposomal Amphotericin B (AmBisome®)

____ mL(____ mg) once daily

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

This drug needs to be given on a regular schedule. It will likely be given at the clinic by an experienced nurse. Ensure that you do not miss your appointment to receive your dose of amphotericin B. Missing doses of amphotericin B may cause your fungal infection to come back or worsen. If you have missed an appointment, call your clinic immediately to rebook an appointment to receive your dose as soon as possible.

What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

Fever and chills may occur shortly after the injection of amphotericin B. The doctor may prescribe hydrocortisone (Solu-cortef®) along with each dose of amphotericin B to decrease the frequency of these reactions. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may be taken 30 minutes before the injection to prevent fever. Other possible adverse effects include **nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps and diarrhea**. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if these symptoms appear and if they are bothersome.

You may also experience **redness, swelling and pain** at the site of injection. Inform your doctor or nurse if this occurs. They can try

to improve this by reducing the drug concentration or infusion rate.

Amphotericin B often affects the **kidney function**. Regular blood tests will be done to detect any problem with your kidneys. If you experience water retention (swelling of ankle and feet) or urinate less than 1 glass per day, inform your doctor. Other possible side effects are severe weakness, muscle cramps, numbness or tingling in the hands and feet.

Regular blood tests will also be done to verify your magnesium and potassium levels as well as your white and red blood cell levels. Your doctor may prescribe some magnesium or potassium supplements if these substances decrease in your blood.

Finally, some people may develop an **allergic reaction** to amphotericin B. Please inform your doctor immediately if you develop a skin rash, itching or difficulties breathing.

It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.

What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

Before starting amphotericin B, please inform your doctor if you have ever had in the past an allergic reaction to this drug or if you have kidney problems.

When given with amphotericin B, many drugs may increase the risk of developing adverse kidney effects. Inform your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking the following drugs:

- aminoglycoside antibiotics (gentamicin, tobramycin, amikacin, etc.)
- cisplatin (Platinol®)
- cyclosporine (Neoral®, Sandimmune®)
- foscarnet (Foscavir®)
- intravenous pentamidine (Pentacarinat®)

Inform your doctor and pharmacist of all prescribed and non-prescribed drugs you are taking. As well, you should inform them of natural products you are taking. If you wish to start a new drug or natural product, please consult with your pharmacist before doing so.

The safety of amphotericin B during pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been established. Please consult your doctor or pharmacist if this is a concern.

How should this drug be STORED?

If you are to receive amphotericin B at home, the diluted amphotericin B intravenous solution should be kept in the refrigerator (2 - 8°C). Depending on the type of amphotericin B prescribed, the solution will be stable for 6 to 48 hours. Consult your pharmacist to know when your bags or bottles of amphotericin B will expire.

Keep well out of the reach of children.

About an hour before your treatment, remove a bag / bottle from the refrigerator and let it warm to room temperature. Check your bag / bottle to ensure that there are no leaks and that there are no solid particles in the solution. If so, you should not use the bag / bottle.

If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

Pharmacist: _____

Telephone: _____

AMPHOTERICIN B

MEDICATION

FACT SHEET

Reference: Product monograph Fungizone® (amphotericin B). Montréal, Qc, Canada: Bristol Myers Squibb Canada Inc, 2009. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003. Reviewed 2009.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be found at: www.hivclinic.ca