

# CASPOFUNGIN

**Other NAMES:** Cancidas®

## WHY is this drug prescribed?

Caspofungin is a drug used for the treatment of various fungal infections. It can be given to treat fungal infections caused by candida [mouth (thrush) and esophagus infections] or aspergillosis.

## HOW should this drug be taken?

Caspofungin can only be given intravenously (IV: by the veins). It is administered slowly over at least 1 hour. The recommended dose is 70 mg on day 1, followed by 50 to 70 mg once daily for the remainder of the treatment.

Your dosage is:

Day 1:  
\_\_\_mL (\_\_\_mg) once a day, then

Day 2 and onwards:

\_\_\_mL (\_\_\_mg) once a day

## What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

Caspofungin will likely be given at a clinic by an experienced nurse.

Ensure that you do not miss your appointment to receive your dose of caspofungin. Missing doses of caspofungin 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.

If you are receiving your doses of caspofungin at home through home care and you have missed a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

## Why should you not forget to take this drug?

If you miss doses of caspofungin, your infection may continue or worsen. In such a situation, you may need to take other drugs. Therefore, it is extremely important that you take caspofungin for the entire duration of the treatment.

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

Caspofungin is generally well tolerated. Some people experience the following adverse effects: fever, pain and swelling at injection site, nausea, vomiting, and headache. During the intravenous infusion, symptoms such as

a sensation of warmth, facial swelling, skin rash and itchiness may occur. Please consult a doctor immediately if you develop a skin rash.

In patients already receiving cyclosporine (Neoral®, Sandimmune®), caspofungin may cause increases in liver enzymes. This will be monitored with your blood work.

**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 caspofungin, notify your doctor and pharmacist if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this drug. Also, inform your doctor if you have a history of liver disease. Your dose may need to be decreased if you have liver problems.

Many drugs have the potential of interfering with caspofungin. 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.

In particular, please notify your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking the following drugs:

- Carbamazepine (Tegretol®)
- Cyclosporine (Neoral®, Sandimmune®)
- Dexamethasone (Dexasone®)
- Efavirenz (Sustiva®)
- Nevirapine (Viramune®)
- Phenytoin (Dilantin™)
- Rifampin (Rifadin®, Rimactane®, Rofact™)

The safety of caspofungin during pregnancy or breastfeeding has not been established. Please discuss this with your doctor if this is a concern. In general, if you have HIV, breastfeeding is NOT recommended as you can transmit the virus to your baby through your breast milk.

### **How should this drug be STORED?**

Once caspofungin is diluted, the solution is stable for 24 hours at room temperature (15 to 25°C) or 48 hours if kept in the refrigerator (2 to 8 °C). Keep the bags in a dry place, protected from light and well out of the reach of children.

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

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: Product Monograph Cancidas® (caspofungin). Kirkland, QC, Canada. Merck Frosst Canada Ltd., 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](http://www.hivclinic.ca).

# ***CASPOFUNGIN***

## ***MEDICATION***

## ***FACT SHEET***