



Nebulised Colomycin[®] – A Patient Guide

Introduction

Nebulisers are used to convert liquid medicines into fine droplets which 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.

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)

What to do

Before you start, please note that Colomycin[®] should be nebulised in a well ventilated room ideally without any other people or animals / pets present.

1. Wash and dry your hands and assemble all necessary equipment.

2. Gently tap the 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 5mL sodium chloride ampoule and squeeze the contents into the colomycin[®] vial.

7. Replace the bung and swirl gently to mix. Avoid shaking the vial as this can cause excessive frothing.

8. Remove the bung again and pour the contents of the colomycin[®] vial into the pot of the nebuliser, turn the compressor on and use your 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.

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.

Colomycin® should be used immediately after preparation. Do not mix the powder with the diluents and store for later use as this can make the medicine less effective and lead to side effects. Any remaining liquid should be discarded immediately.

Although it is not necessary to use filters for your nebuliser, they can reduce the amount of the drug passing into the surrounding air. If you have a specific reason for requiring a filter you can choose to purchase some direct from Pari Medical (01932 341122).

- **Side Effects**

Sometimes Colomycin® can lead to unwanted effects such as coughing, bronchospasm (a tight feeling in the chest) and a sore throat or mouth. It can also rarely cause a rash; if you develop a rash contact your doctor before taking any further doses. The first time you use nebulised Colomycin® you will have help and supervision from a nurse. They will assess your breathing before and after to check you do not have any immediate unwanted effects.

- **Further Supplies**

Although treatment is usually started in hospital, it will be your GP who will be responsible for providing prescriptions for Colomycin® and all the necessary equipment. You can then 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/or 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.

For further information phone either:

The Pharmacy Helpline on 01603 287139 between 9am & 5pm Monday to Friday or the Cystic Fibrosis Specialist Nurses on 01603 287596.

The information in this leaflet is intended for general guidance. If your doctor has given you different advice, follow those instructions.

