Alert

High risk medicine. The Antimicrobial Stewardship Team recommends this drug is listed under the following category: Unrestricted.

Indication

Treatment of mild infections due to susceptible strains of bacteria. Prophylaxis of urinary tract infections in patients at risk, such as vesicoureteric reflux.

Action

First generation cephalosporin. Bactericidal – inhibits cell wall synthesis in susceptible organisms. Most active against Gram-positive cocci, including MSSA and streptococci. Has no activity against enterococci, MRSA or Listeria.¹

Drug type

Cephalosporin antibiotic.

Trade name

APO-Cefalexin, Cefalexin Sandoz, Ialex, Ibilex, Keflex.

Presentation

125 mg/5 mL suspension
250 mg/5 mL suspension

Dose

<table>
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<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Postnatal Age (Days)</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Interval</th>
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<td>0–7 days</td>
<td>25 mg/kg</td>
<td>12-hourly</td>
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<td>8–28 days</td>
<td>25 mg/kg</td>
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<td>≥29 days</td>
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Prophylaxis of urinary tract infection (UTI)
12.5 (10–15) mg/kg/dose DAILY (maximum dose 125 mg daily).⁷,⁸

Prophylaxis around Micturating Cystourethrogram (MCU)
12.5 (10–15) mg/kg/dose 8-hourly for 3 days (day prior, on the day and one day after MCU).¹⁰

Dose adjustment

Maximum dose 500 mg

Total cumulative dose

Route Oral

Preparation

Supplied reconstituted by Pharmacy. If supplied unreconstituted, use water for injection with the volume specified on the packaging for reconstitution.

Administration

Shake bottle well before measuring dose. Prophylactic dose: May be taken with or without food. Treatment dose: Preferably commence treatment without feeds for faster absorption and higher peak concentrations³

Monitoring

Renal, hepatic and haematological function with prolonged use.

Contraindications

Hypersensitivity to cephalosporins. Immediate hypersensitivity or severe reaction to penicillins.

Precautions

Use with caution in patients with hypersensitivity or mild adverse reactions to penicillins or carbapenems as cross-reactivity can occur (e.g. rash).

Drug interactions Not applicable.

Adverse reactions


Compatibility Not applicable.

Incompatibility Not applicable.

Stability Reconstituted solution should be discarded after 14 days.

Storage Store powder below 25°C Store reconstituted solution between 2 and 8°C

Excipients

Special comments May cause false positive Coombs test. Consider increasing dosing interval in significant renal impairment.
Evidence

Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics

First-generation cephalosporins are most active against gram-positive cocci, including MSSA and streptococci. They have no activity against enterococci, MRSA, or Listeria. Therapeutic concentrations occur in most tissues, including pleura, synovial fluids, and bone, but not middle ear fluid. First-generation cephalosporins should not be used if bacterial meningitis is possible, due to poor CSF penetration, with or without inflammation. Cefalexin is rapidly absorbed in the upper intestine. Distribution to the tissues, other than the spinal fluid and aqueous humour, is rapidly achieved. Cefalexin does not penetrate host cells, which probably accounts for its low incidence of side effects. Binding to human serum proteins is low and there is no measurable metabolism in body fluids. Cefalexin is rapidly cleared from the body by the kidneys. In adults, 70 to 100% of the dose is found in the urine 6–8 h after each dose. The elimination half-life was 0.8 hours in adults. In infants and children, following ingestion of a 15 mg/kg dose, mean peak concentrations of cefalexin in serum were achieved at one-half hour (23.4 microgram/mL) in fasting and at one hour (9.0 microg/mL) in non-fasting patients. Administration of drug with milk reduced the mean peak concentration by 60% and the area-under-the-curve value by approximately 40%. The half-life in serum was approximately 60 minutes. Concentrations in tears and saliva were below MIC for many organisms. In 40 newborn infants given 15 mg/kg cefalexin every 8 hours the serum concentrations of cefalexin were lower than the average MIC for many of the Gram-negative organisms encountered in the neonatal period. In a second series, in 30 newborn infants who received 50 mg/kg every 12 hours, adequate serum concentrations were achieved. Urinary excretion of cefalexin in 24 hours ranged from 5 to 66% of the total daily dose suggesting 50 to 60% of the administered dose of cefalexin is absorbed by the newborn infant. Pharmacokinetic data are lacking in preterm infants.

Efficacy

Trials on cefalexin in treating specific infections in neonates are lacking. Beyond the neonatal age group, American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a cefalexin dosage of 50–100 mg/kg/day in 4 divided doses. Antimicrobial prophylaxis for UTI: The suggested prophylactic dose of cefalexin ranges from 10–12.5 mg/kg/dose daily. Due to concerns about bacterial resistance, it is suggested to use cefalexin or amoxicillin (based on culture and susceptibility results) as second-choice antibiotics for prophylaxis beyond 3 months of age.

Antimicrobial prophylaxis for micturating cystourethrogram (MCUG): NICE Guideline 2007 recommends a 3-day antibiotic course with MCUG taking place on the second day. Cefalexin 10–15 mg/kg/dose 8-hourly for 3 days in children aged 2 months to 5 years undergoing MCUG was reported to reduce MCUG-associated UTI in a randomised, controlled trial. (LOE:II)

Safety

Non-pruritic rashes occur in 1% to 2.8% of patients and are not a contraindication to future use. True anaphylactic reactions related to cephalosporins are rare, with an estimated risk of 0.0001% to 0.1%. Cephalosporin-induced anaphylaxis is no greater among penicillin-allergic patients according to newer evidence that established that previous rates of cross-reactivity between penicillins and cephalosporins were overestimated.

Practice points

References


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