

# Cimetidine

## **Why is this medication prescribed?**

Cimetidine is used to treat ulcers of the stomach or intestines and prevent them from returning after treatment. This medication is also used to treat certain stomach and throat problems caused by too much acid (e.g., Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, erosive esophagitis) or a backward flow of stomach acid into the esophagus (gastroesophageal reflux disease-GERD).

## **How should this medicine be used?**

If this medication is to be given into a vein, follow instructions for mixing with the correct IV fluids. Premixed bags should be given only into a vein.

Before injecting each dose, clean the injection site with rubbing alcohol. Before using, check this product visually for particles or discoloration. If either is present, do not use the liquid.

Cimetidine is injected into a vein or muscle by a health care professional, usually every 6 to 8 hours or as directed by your doctor. When injected into a vein, cimetidine should be given slowly over at least 5 minutes. Giving the medication too fast may cause dizziness, irregular heartbeat, or a drop in blood pressure. Your healthcare professional will be watching you for these symptoms. If you experience any of these symptoms while receiving this medication, tell your health care professional immediately. This medication may also be mixed in a solution and injected slowly over 15-20 minutes or continuously.

The dosage and length of treatment are based on your medical condition and response to treatment. The dosage in children may also be based on body weight. Do not increase your dose, use this medication more often than prescribed, or stop using it without first consulting your doctor.

## **Other uses for this medicine**

Cimetidine injection is also used to prevent serious stomach bleeding in very ill patients (usually in the hospital/ICU).

## **What special precautions should I follow?**

Before using cimetidine, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other H<sub>2</sub> blockers (e.g., ranitidine); or if you have any other allergies.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of heart problems (e.g., irregular heartbeat), immune system problems, kidney disease, liver problems, lung diseases (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-COPD).

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy. Use caution while driving, using machinery, or doing any activity that requires alertness. Limit alcoholic beverages.

A preservative (benzyl alcohol) that may be found in this product or in the liquid used to mix this product can infrequently cause serious problems (sometimes death) if more than 100 milligrams daily is given to an infant during the first months of life. The risk is greater with low-birth-weight

infants. Symptoms include sudden gasping, low blood pressure, or a very slow heartbeat. If you notice any of these symptoms in your newborn, tell the doctor immediately. If possible, a preservative-free product should be used when treating newborns.

Therefore, elderly people may be at greater risk for side effects.

During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed..

Breast-feeding while using this drug is not recommended.

### **What should I do if I forget a dose?**

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

### **What side effects can this medication cause?**

Stop using cimetidine and get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these serious side effects:

- cough, fever, chest congestion, trouble breathing;
- red or blistering skin rash;
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- easy bruising or bleeding, unusual weakness;
- feeling faint, light-headed, disoriented, or confused;
- urinating less than usual;
- irregular heartbeat; or
- a rash.

Other less serious side effects are more likely to occur. Talk with your doctor if you have any of these side effects:

- feeling dizzy, depressed, or agitated;
- breast swelling or tenderness (in men);
- joint or muscle pain;
- mild skin rash;
- headache; or
- diarrhea, nausea, or constipation.

### **What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?**

Store the premixed solution at room temperature at 25 degrees C away from light and moisture. Store the vials at room temperature between 20-25 degrees C away from light and moisture. Store the mixed solution at room temperature. Do not refrigerate. Discard any unused drug 48 hours after preparation.

In case of emergency/overdose

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

**What other information should I know?**

Taking cimetidine may make you more susceptible to virus that can cause pneumonia. This has occurred most often in elderly people and in those with diabetes, a weak immune system, or chronic lung disease. Before using cimetidine, tell your doctor if you have any of these conditions.

There may be other drugs that can affect cimetidine. Tell your doctor about all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you use. This includes vitamins, minerals, herbal products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start using a new medication without telling your doctor.

