

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Desferrioxamine

ABOUT your medicine

Your doctor has prescribed desferrioxamine (Desferal®) injection for you. This is an agent that chelates (binds) with iron and aluminium ions to form a complex. The complex formed between desferrioxamine and the iron or aluminium ions is then excreted from the body.

Excess iron in the blood can arise from acute iron poisoning or iron overload as a result of multiple blood transfusions administered for the treatment of some chronic anaemias and thalassaemia.

Desferrioxamine can also be used in aluminium overload which can arise in patients with kidney diseases and who are on dialysis and/or who have anaemia, and for the diagnosis of iron storage disease and iron overload in certain anaemias.

HOW should I take the medicine?

The doctor, nurse or pharmacist may prepare your injection for you. If you are preparing your injection yourself, follow the instructions given by your healthcare professional.

Desferrioxamine may be given, either by slow injection into a vein over a period of time (called a slow intravenous infusion), or by injection under your skin over a period of time using a special pump (called a subcutaneous infusion). Desferrioxamine may also be given intramuscularly (injected into the muscle).

The dose that you need will depend on why you have to use desferrioxamine. Your doctor will work out the exact amount of the medicine you need.

What should I do if **I FORGET** a dose?

If you miss one of your appointments, please let your doctor or nurse know immediately. If you are giving yourself the subcutaneous infusion at home, make sure you resume your next dose at the usual time at the **USUAL** dose.

What are the possible **SIDE-EFFECTS** of the medicine?

Your urine may turn a reddish-brown colour. This is because the extra iron that binds to the desferrioxamine passes into your urine and is reddish-brown in colour. This is normal and usually nothing to worry about.

A lot of people use desferrioxamine without any problems. However, some side-effects may occur. The most common side-effect occurs at the site of injection (pain, itch, swelling and redness). You may also experience aching muscles and joints.

Less common side-effects include rash on your body, headaches, fever and feeling of sickness, diarrhoea or stomachache. In children, bony changes and growth impairment may occur. If your child is using desferrioxamine and you are concerned about this, talk to your doctor.

Other rare side-effects that may occur include blurred vision, trouble seeing at night or trouble seeing colors. The medicine may also affect your liver and kidney function. Sometimes, if not given in the right way, desferrioxamine injection may also cause dizziness or faintness due to low blood pressure.

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these side-effects:

- (1) Skin rash, itching or hives;
- (2) Slow, fast or irregular heartbeat; and
- (3) Ringing in your ears or trouble hearing.

Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about any side-effects of the medicine. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk to your doctor before using this medicine. Inform your doctor if you are also taking vitamin C.

How should **I STORE** the medicine?

Before it is dissolved, store it in a cool dry place below 25°C. Do not freeze.

Each vial is for single use only. After reconstitution of the vial, treatment should start within 3 hours of preparation. If the solution has been prepared under sterile conditions, it may be stored at 25°C or below for up to 24 hours before being used. Any unused desferrioxamine should be thrown away.

DO NOT use this product after the expiry date printed on the carton and glass vial.

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The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

Information is correct at time of printing and subject to revision without prior notice.

Keep all medication out of reach of children

Discard all medication that has expired or is no longer required