

Oxford Centre for Respiratory Medicine, Churchill Hospital

Information about Colomycin

What is Colomycin?

Colomycin (also known as colistin) belongs to a group of antibiotics called polymyxins. It works by altering the bacterial cell membrane structure causing the cell contents to leak out. This kills the bacteria. Colomycin can be used to treat *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections. It can be inhaled or given intravenously.

What are the possible side effects of colomycin?

If you experience any of the following serious side effects, stop taking colomycin and seek emergency medical attention:

- Skin rash
- Swelling of the face, tongue or neck
- Unable to breath

Other, less serious side effects may be more likely to occur. Continue to take colomycin and talk to the CF/Bronchiectasis team if you experience:

- Dizziness, clumsiness or unsteadiness
- Problems with eyesight
- Numbness, skin tingling, muscle twitching or seizures
- Slurred speech

Side effects other than those listed above may also occur. Talk to a member of the CF/Bronchiectasis team about any side effect that seems unusual or that is especially bothersome.

Why do I have to have regular blood tests for colomycin taken at a specified time?

During your course of colomycin we need to check that the antibiotic is working towards clearing the infection.

The first blood level for colomycin has to be taken between the THIRD and FIFTH dose. The following levels are taken after the seventh and fourteenth doses.

The levels must be taken just before a dose is given - the TROUGH level, and one hour after the injection is given – the PEAK level.

If the resulting level is too low, the antibiotic will be working to fight the infection, but not as well as it could be.

If the resulting level is too high, the colomycin is working at it's optimum level, however, there is the greater risk of side effects .

If necessary, we can increase or decrease the dose so that you gain the maximum benefit from the course of IV antibiotics with minimal side effects.