

USE OF REMDESIVIR IN HOSPITALISED PATIENTS WITH COVID-19

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

This information leaflet contains important information about the medicine called remdesivir when used in the treatment of COVID-19.

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL BENEFIT OF REMDESIVIR FOR COVID-19?

Remdesivir is a new antiviral medicine that is provisionally registered to treat COVID-19 in Australia. The brand name of remdesivir is Veklury®.

Recent clinical trials studying the effectiveness of remdesivir in COVID-19 have been analysed by Australia's [National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce](#). The Taskforce makes recommendations about when remdesivir is most likely to be of benefit in the treatment of COVID-19 and when it is likely not to be of benefit.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN USING REMDESIVIR IN COVID-19?

Because remdesivir is a new antiviral drug and provisionally (not fully) registered to treat COVID-19 in Australia, information about its effectiveness and safety continues to be gathered.

It is important that patients and their carers understand when and why remdesivir may be useful. Your doctors will provide more information about its effectiveness and safety in your condition.

It is important you provide your formal consent before receiving remdesivir. You can always change your mind about treatment with remdesivir and withdraw consent at any time.

WHAT SHOULD THE DOCTOR KNOW BEFORE REMDESIVIR IS USED IN COVID-19?

The doctor should know about:

- any liver or kidney problems
- any other conditions including diabetes, heart problems, blood disorders, epilepsy or seizures
- previous allergic reactions to any medicine
- all medicines including over-the-counter and complementary medicines e.g. vitamins, minerals, herbal or naturopathic medicines that you are taking or have recently taken
- the possibility of pregnancy or plans for pregnancy

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF REMDESIVIR?

All medicines have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, but most of the time they are not, and many of them disappear with time or when treatment is stopped. Medical treatment may be needed with some side effects. Side effects may not be experienced. Some possible side effects that might be experienced during treatment with remdesivir are shown below. There is a possibility of experiencing other unknown side effects with remdesivir when it is used in people with COVID-19. Because remdesivir is a new medicine, patients who receive remdesivir will be monitored closely.

Possible side effects of remdesivir	What to do
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, rash	Tell the doctor or nurse if these symptoms occur and they can help treat them.
Effects on the liver	The doctor will monitor for these side effects.
Reactions that may occur when remdesivir is given include low blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, sweating, and shivering. Pain, bleeding, bruising of the skin, soreness, swelling and possible infections at the injection site	The doctor and/or nurse will monitor for these side effects.

Please note: Because remdesivir is a new medicine, it is important to report side effects to the doctor directly and/or to the Therapeutic Goods Administration at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

ARE THERE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WITH REMDESIVIR TREATMENT?

Use with Other Medicines

Because remdesivir is a new medicine, there is limited information about its potential to interact with other medicines. As with all medicines, there is potential for remdesivir to interact with other medicines with serious consequences. The doctors and other health professionals (e.g. pharmacist, nurse) should be informed about all medications normally taken or planned. This includes over-the-counter and complementary medicines e.g. vitamins, minerals, herbal or naturopathic medicines.

The doctor and pharmacist will check for potential drug interactions before remdesivir is started and when it is stopped.

Use in Children or Adolescents

There is very little information about remdesivir use in children or adolescents. Your doctor will consider the severity of the illness, age and weight of the child when deciding whether to recommend remdesivir.

Fertility, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

- The effect of remdesivir on fertility is unknown.
- More information is needed about remdesivir use in pregnant and breastfeeding women. Use will only be considered if the potential benefit is thought to outweigh risk to the mother or baby. Consult the doctor and pharmacist for information and advice.
- It is recommended that breastfeeding is stopped during remdesivir treatment. Consult the doctor and pharmacist for information and advice.

HOW IS REMDESIVIR GIVEN?

- Remdesivir is given by a doctor or nurse ONCE a day by slow injection into the body through a vein, usually for 5 days. The slow injection (also called an infusion) can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours and will be given in a hospital setting.
- Your doctor will decide what dose is right for you and how many doses you should receive.

ADDITIONAL REMDESIVIR INFORMATION

- Gilead Sciences Pty Ltd. Australian Consumer Medicines Information – Veklury® (Remdesivir) Concentrate for Injection. Therapeutic Goods Administration. Published July 2020. <https://search.tga.gov.au/s/search.html?query=remdesivir&collection=tga-artg&profile=record>
- National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce. Australian Guidelines for the Clinical Care of people with COVID-19. <https://covid19evidence.net.au/#living-guidelines>

My notes:

© 2021 NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group Inc

Disclaimer: This document is provided for information only, current at the time of publication. It may be updated periodically and it is recommended that the document is downloaded from the NSW TAG website when required for individual patient, carer and family use. It does not include all available information. It is not intended to substitute for medical advice and should not be used solely to determine actual treatment choices or decisions.