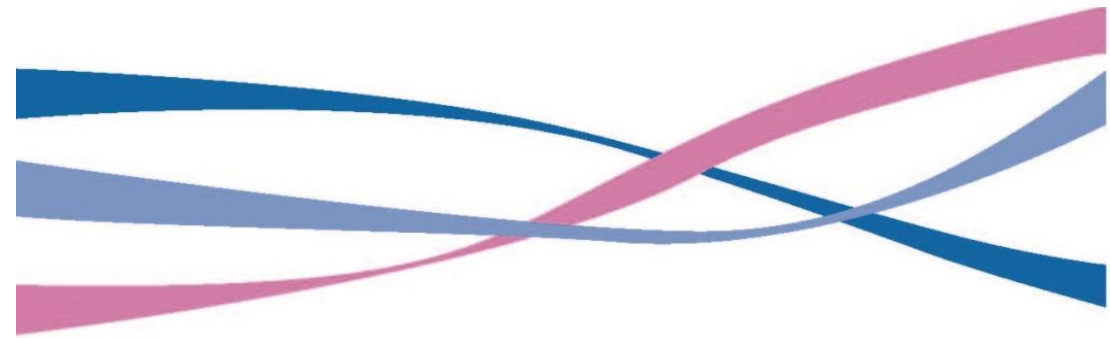


Gentamicin and your ears

Important information for patients



This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.



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What is gentamicin used for?

Gentamicin is an antibiotic used to treat serious bacterial infections. You have been prescribed gentamicin by your doctor for your infection.

How can gentamicin affect my ears?

Like all medicines, gentamicin may occasionally have side effects. Gentamicin can occasionally cause damage to the ears. This may make you feel dizzy, have trouble keeping your balance, cause ringing in your ears (tinnitus) and lead to hearing loss. In some cases these effects may be irreversible.

It is difficult to estimate the risk of these effects occurring in individual patients as it depends on a number of factors. What is known is that the risk increases if your kidneys do not work very well or you are over 65 years old.

What can be done to reduce the chance of this happening?

If you are at an increased risk of developing these problems we would try to avoid using gentamicin to treat you. However, in some serious infections this may not be possible. In this situation your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with you.

You will have regular blood tests to check the amount of gentamicin in your blood and check your kidney function.

It is important that you tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including over the counter medicines or herbal remedies, because gentamicin can affect the action of some other medicines and vice-versa.

Your doctor may decide to alter some of your other medications while you are taking gentamicin.

You must tell a healthcare professional on the ward as soon as possible if you experience any problems which may be caused by damage to the ears, such as:

- difficulty keeping your balance
- dizziness
- ringing in your ears
- hearing loss

How can I get more information on gentamicin?

This leaflet only provides information about the side effects that gentamicin may have on your ears. If you would like information about other side effects of gentamicin, please ask the nursing staff for copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet. This leaflet is also available on the following website: www.medicines.org.uk

The doctors caring for you will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. You can also ask to speak to one of the pharmacists or nurses caring for you.