Artesunate Intravenous for Adults

Who can administer

May be administered by registered competent doctor or nurse/midwife

Important information

- Consultation with Microbiology/Infectious diseases recommended [ref 1]
- Unlicensed preparation
- Stock is **kept in ED** (Zone A Clinic Room, Press 2, Tray 1 - under RESTRICTED ANTIMICROBIALS)
- In severe malaria it is important to avoid delay and to start treatment with either IV quinine or IV artesunate as soon as possible (within one hour of assessment) [ref 1]

Available preparations

Artesun 60mg vial

Reconstitution

- Add **1ml** Sodium Bicarbonate 5% diluent (provided in box) to the powder for injection
- Shake the vial for several minutes until the solution becomes clear - **if the solution is cloudy, or a precipitate is present, it should be discarded** - this reconstituted solution must be used **within one hour of preparation**
- For **intravenous use** following reconstitution, further dilute with 5ml of Sodium chloride 0.9% (provided in box) and mix well, ensuring that the **resulting solution is still clear**
- The resulting solution contains artesunate 10mg per ml (60mg in 6ml)

Methods of intravenous administration

Slow intravenous injection ONLY

- Give required dose over 1 to 2 minutes

Dose in adults

For patients with clinically severe malaria

- Give 2.4mg/kg IV at 0, 12, 24 hours, then every 24 hours until oral treatment can be substituted e.g. 168mg in a 70kg patient
- Give intravenous artesunate for a minimum of 24 hours (three doses), then switch to oral therapy (provided the patient is able to swallow and absorb medication) as per GUH

guidelinesÂ [ref 1])
- Dose adjustment is not required in renal or hepatic impairment

Monitoring

- Monitor blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, signs of hypersensitivity and haemoglobin levels [ref 2]
- Monitor patients for 4 weeks after treatment for evidence of haemolytic anaemiaÂ [ref 2]

Further information

Intramuscular injection

- May also be given via this route (See SPC in box)- contact Microbiology/Infectious Disease Consultant and Pharmacy for directions

Storage

Store below 25^{0}C

References

Artesun SPC August 2022

1.GUH Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines

2. Injectable medicines guide, downloaded 7th Mary 2025

Also available:Guidelines for the Treatment of Malaria : World Health Organisation. Nov 2024

Therapeutic classification

Anti-malarial

BNF
Malaria