

Valganciclovir

Newborn Use Only

2017

Alert	Oral valganciclovir is a cytotoxic agent.
Indication	1) Treatment of severe or moderately severe, symptomatic congenital CMV, or 2) Treatment of acute severe CMV disease.
Action	Valganciclovir is an L-valyl ester salt (prodrug) of ganciclovir which, after oral administration, is rapidly converted to ganciclovir by intestinal and hepatic esterases. Synthetic nucleoside analogue of 2-deoxyguanosine that inhibits replication of herpes viruses. Sensitive human viruses include cytomegalovirus, herpes simplex virus 1 and 2, herpes virus type 6, 7 and 8, Epstein-Barr virus, varicella zoster virus and hepatitis B virus.
Drug Type	Antiviral.
Trade Name	Valcyte
Presentation	Valganciclovir hydrochloride powder for oral solution. The reconstituted solution contains 50 mg/mL valganciclovir and appears clear, colourless to brownish-yellow in colour.
Dosage/Interval	16 mg/kg/dose 12 hourly* *In acute, severe CMV disease including hepatitis, use IV ganciclovir as initial therapy and change over to oral valganciclovir once clinically stable. Duration of treatment: 1. Treatment of severe or moderately severe, symptomatic congenital CMV – maximum 6 months. 2. Treatment of acute severe CMV disease – as per the disease progress and response.
Route	Oral
Preparation/Dilution	Valganciclovir is a cytotoxic agent. Refer to your local policy in regards to safety precautions/facilities required to reconstitute the powder for oral solution.
Administration	Valganciclovir is a cytotoxic agent. Follow full cytotoxic precautions as per local policy. Should be given with feeds and can be given with other medications.
Monitoring	Full blood count, particularly neutrophil count, should be followed weekly for 6 weeks, then at week 8, then monthly for the duration of therapy. Liver function tests monthly throughout therapy. Renal function tests.
Contraindications	Hypersensitivity to ganciclovir, valganciclovir, aciclovir or valacyclovir. Patients with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> absolute neutrophil count below $0.5 \times 10^9/L$, or platelet count below $25 \times 10^9/L$ unless thrombocytopenia is related to CMV disease, or haemoglobin less than 80 g/L (8 g/dL).
Precautions	Active component of valganciclovir (i.e. ganciclovir) has both gonadal toxicity and carcinogenicity in animal models and its long-term safety after administration to young children is not established.
Drug Interactions	Convulsions have been reported in patients receiving ganciclovir (metabolite of valganciclovir) and imipenem-cilastatin concurrently. Concurrent use of tacrolimus and ganciclovir increases nephrotoxicity.
Adverse Reactions	Commonly causes neutropenia. If absolute neutrophil count (ANC) falls below $0.5 \times 10^9/L$, and if it is thought not to be due to CMV disease, withhold medication until ANC is above $0.75 \times 10^9/L$, then restart medication at half dose. If ANC falls below $0.5 \times 10^9/L$ again, consider discontinuing the medication. Can also cause anaemia and thrombocytopenia. Discontinue medication if platelet count below $25 \times 10^9/L$ or haemoglobin less than 80 g/L occurs and is thought not to be due to CMV disease.
Stability	The reconstituted solution should be discarded 49 days after reconstitution.
Storage	Store powder for reconstitution below 25°C. After reconstitution, the solution should be stored in the refrigerator (2-8°C). Do not freeze.

Special Comments	
Evidence summary	<p>Efficacy and safety:</p> <p>Symptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus disease: A randomised controlled trial (RCT) in infants \geq 32 weeks GA of 6 weeks IV ganciclovir 6 mg/kg every 12 hours demonstrated more infants had improved hearing or maintained normal hearing between baseline and 6 months in the IV ganciclovir group versus placebo (84% vs 59%, $p=0.06$) and fewer infants had worsening hearing (0% vs 41%, $p < 0.01$).¹ This effect is sustained at 1 year of age, when 21% infants in the treatment group had worsening hearing versus 68% in the placebo group ($p < 0.01$).¹ Two-thirds of the treatment group developed significant neutropenia¹. At 12 months infants treated with 6 weeks IV ganciclovir had fewer developmental delays.² [Ganciclovir: LOE II GORR B]</p> <p>An RCT of oral valganciclovir 16 mg/kg 12 hourly for 6 months versus 6 weeks in neonates \geq 32 weeks and \leq 30 days of age and weighing at least 1800 g at the initiation of therapy reported better total-ear hearing at 12 months in patients treated for 6 months compared to 6 weeks (73% vs. 57%, $P = 0.01$), which is modestly maintained at 24 months (77% vs. 64%, $P = 0.04$), without an increase in neutropenia. The 6-month group had better neurodevelopment scores at 24 months.³ Valganciclovir treatment was associated with neutropenia,³ although the incidence was markedly lower than previously observed with intravenous ganciclovir.^{1,2} [LOE II GOR B]</p> <p>There are case reports of the use of oral valganciclovir in extreme preterm infants.⁹⁻¹²</p> <p>International Congenital Cytomegalovirus Recommendations Group: Ganciclovir is now available as an oral prodrug, valganciclovir. A recent RCT now recommends valganciclovir treatment for congenitally-infected neonates \geq 32 weeks of life, with moderate to severe symptomatic disease, to be commenced within the first month of life and for 6 months. Antiviral therapy should not be administered to neonates with asymptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus infections. Antiviral therapy is not routinely recommended for asymptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus infection with isolated sensorineural hearing loss, or for neonates with mildly symptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus infection.⁴ [LOE II, GOR B]</p> <p>Pharmacokinetics:</p> <p>A pharmacokinetic study showed that oral valganciclovir 16 mg/kg every 12 hours achieved similar concentrations to IV ganciclovir 6 mg/kg every 12 hours. Only a marginal decrease in AUC_{12} over time was noted after administration of the valganciclovir oral solution despite increased clearance, due to increased bioavailability, by 32% over the same period. The oral bioavailability of valganciclovir averaged 41.1% (95% CI, 30.8%–51.4%).⁵ [LOE III, GOR B]</p>
References	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kimberlin DW, Lin CY, Sanchez PJ, Demmler GJ, Dankner W, Shelton M, Jacobs RF, Vaudry W, Pass RF, Kiell JM, Soong SJ, Whitley RJ. Effect of ganciclovir therapy on hearing in symptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus disease involving the central nervous system: A randomized, controlled trial. <i>Journal of Pediatrics</i>. 2003;143:16-25. 2. Oliver SE, Cloud GA, Sanchez PJ, Demmler GJ, Dankner W, Shelton M, Jacobs RF, Vaudry W, Pass RF, Soong SJ, Whitley RJ, Kimberlin DW. Neurodevelopmental outcomes following ganciclovir therapy in symptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus infections involving the central nervous system. <i>Journal of Clinical Virology</i>. 2009;46:S22-S6. 3. Kimberlin DW, Jester PM, Sanchez PJ, Ahmed A, Arav-Boger R, Michaels MG, Ashouri N, Englund JA, Estrada B, Jacobs RF, Romero JR, Sood SK, Whitworth MS, Abzug MJ, Caserta MT, Fowler S, Lujan-Zilbermann J, Storch GA, DeBiasi RL, Han JY, Palmer A, Weiner LB, Bocchini JA, Dennehy PH, Finn A, Griffiths PD, Luck S, Gutierrez K, Halasa N, Homans J, Shane AL, Sharland M, Simonsen K, Vanchiere JA, Woods CR, Sabo DL, Aban I, Kuo H, James SH, Prichard MN, Griffin J, Giles D, Acosta EP, Whitley RJ. Valganciclovir for symptomatic congenital cytomegalovirus disease. <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i>. 2015;372:933-43. 4. Rawlinson WD, Boppana SB, Fowler KB, Kimberlin DW, Lazzarotto T, Alain S, Daly K, Doutré S, Gibson L, Giles ML, Greenlee J, Hamilton ST, Harrison GJ, Hui L, Jones CA, Palasanthiran P,

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