Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Gentamicin

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Gentamicin

Patient Information

Microbiology Department

- Author ID: MJD
- Leaflet Ref: M 003
- Version: 2
- Leaflet title: Gentamicin
- Date Produced: April 2024
- Expiry Date: April 2026

What is gentamicin used for?

Gentamicin is an antibiotic used to treat serious infections caused by bacteria. Your doctor may decide to give you gentamicin because it will be the most effective antibiotic for your infection, or because there is a reason you cannot have other antibiotics. Gentamicin can be used on its own, but it can also be used together with other antibiotics.

How is gentamicin given?

Gentamicin is given into a vein via a drip, or less often as an injection. The dose of gentamicin given to you will depend on what kind of infection you have, your age, your weight and how well your kidneys are working.

What problems can gentamicin cause?

Like all medicines, gentamicin can have side effects.

Gentamicin can occasionally cause damage to the ears. If this happens, it can make you feel dizzy or off balance or cause a ringing in your ears (“tinnitus”) or hearing loss. In some cases, these effects may not get better.

Gentamicin can occasionally cause damage to the kidneys. This is not something you will notice yourself, but you will have blood tests to check how well your kidneys are working and to see how much gentamicin is in your system.

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

Gentamicin doses are carefully calculated for each patient to ensure you get a dose that is right for you. The amount of gentamicin in your blood will be measured regularly to check you are on the right dose. Your doctor will also do blood tests to check how well your kidneys are working.

Is there anything that I can do?

Before starting Gentamicin, please tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have **mitochondrial disease, myasthenia gravis, a family history of hearing loss** or **kidney problems**. You should also inform them if you are, or there is a chance you are, **pregnant**.

It is important that you tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including over the counter medicines (bought from a pharmacy) or herbal remedies, because gentamicin does not mix well with some other medicines. It is extremely important that you tell your doctor, ward pharmacist or nurse if you experience any problems which may be caused by damage to the ear, such as difficulty keeping your balance, dizziness, a ringing in your ears or hearing loss.

Who can I speak to if I have any questions?

This leaflet has been produced specially to provide information about the side effects that gentamicin can have.

If you want more information about other side effects of gentamicin there is a patient information leaflet produced by the manufacturers, which is available in each box of gentamicin. You can ask the nursing staff caring for you to give you the manufacturer's leaflet, or you can find it online at: 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.



Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust