

ACETYLCYSTEINE for NEBULISATION

Other names: Martindale Pharma Acetylcysteine®
DBL Acetylcysteine Injection Concentrate®



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medication

A nebuliser is a machine that turns liquid into a fine mist which can be easily breathed into the lungs. Acetylcysteine is a medication that can be nebulised to help reduce the thickness of lung secretions. This makes it easier for you to cough the secretions up, or have them removed by other means (e.g. suctioning or percussion).

How to prepare the solution

1. Acetylcysteine ampoules come as 2g/10mL (20%). If a 20% solution is required you can use the solution undiluted. If a 10% solution is required, draw up 10mL of acetylcysteine in a syringe and add 10mL of sodium chloride 0.9% or alternately add 2mL of the 20% acetylcysteine solution and 2mL of sodium chloride 0.9% to the nebuliser bowl. Ask your pharmacist or nurse to show you how to do this.
2. The usual amount to be nebulised is 4mL. If there is any remaining unused acetylcysteine solution, store this in the fridge (capped with syringe cap), but discard after 24 hours.
3. Place the liquid to be nebulised into the nebuliser bowl, and nebulise as directed. If you are unsure how to do this – contact your nurse or whoever supplied you with your nebuliser.
4. Conventional nebulisers made of plastic or glass may be used. However, acetylcysteine is not compatible with rubber, iron, copper or nickel. If you have any questions regarding the compatibility of acetylcysteine with your nebuliser contact the supplier of your nebuliser.
5. You can breathe in the vapour via a mouthpiece, face mask or tracheostomy. If a face mask is used there may be stickiness on your face afterwards. This can be easily removed by washing with water.
6. **Note:** acetylcysteine must be nebulised with room air (not oxygen).
7. Clean the nebuliser immediately after use to prevent it clogging.

Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- chest tightness
- increased shortness of breath, wheezing or coughing
- rash and skin eruptions
- fever and chills

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- stomatitis (inflammation of the moist lining of the mouth)
- nausea, vomiting
- drowsiness
- clamminess
- severe rhinorrhoea (excessive running of the nose)

Other information

If nebulising acetylcysteine at home and shortness of breath develops afterwards, use your usual reliever inhaler or nebuliser e.g. salbutamol (Ventolin®). If you still have difficulty breathing, contact your doctor or the emergency department immediately, but continue to use your reliever medication.

Acetylcysteine is not funded by PHARMAC. A special application (Hospital Exceptional Circumstances) can be applied for by your hospital consultant to help with the cost.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.