

Inhaled Colistin

How to use it

This handout explains how to use inhaled colistin, and describes possible side effects.

What is inhaled colistin?

Colistin (*colistimethate sodium*) is an antibiotic. It is used to treat lung infections caused by *pseudomonas*, a type of bacteria.

When colistin is taken as an inhaled solution, it goes directly to the lungs. This reduces side effects that might occur in other parts of the body.

How do I use it?

You will inhale colistin 2 times a day through a *PARI LC nebulizer*, a device that produces a fine spray of liquid. Steps for mixing the colistin powder are on page 2.

Are there side effects?

Inhaled colistin can cause *bronchospasm* or wheezing (tightness in the lungs). We will give you a *challenge dose* of colistin in the clinic to test for this reaction before you start using colistin.

If wheezing occurs, use *albuterol* to relieve your symptoms. Using albuterol at least 15 minutes before each colistin dose will usually stop wheezing from occurring with future doses.

When to Call for Help

Stop your colistin treatment and call your doctor **right away** if you have any of these signs:

- Swelling in your face or hands
- Swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat
- Chest tightness and difficulty breathing
- Hives or general itching



Talk with your provider if you have any questions about your lung infection.

- Numbness or tingling in your hands or feet
- A decrease in how much or how often you urinate
- Streaks of blood in your saliva (*hemoptysis*) when you cough or spit

Women: Before using colistin, tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

Mixing Colistin

Use a 5 cc (5 mL) syringe with an 18 gauge needle.

1. Draw up 4 cc of sodium chloride 0.9% into the syringe.
2. Inject the sodium chloride slowly into the vial of colistin powder.
3. **Slowly** roll the vial between your palms until the powder is dissolved all the way. **Do not shake** the vial or the solution will turn to foam and you will not be able to use it. If a lot of foam forms, put the vial down for several minutes. After the foam has gone down, roll the vial gently to dissolve the rest of the powder.

Using Inhaled Colistin

If your dose is 75 mg twice a day:

Use either newly-made colistin solution **or** the leftover colistin solution from your refrigerator.

1. Use the syringe to slowly draw out **2 cc** of the colistin solution.
2. Place the solution in the nebulizer cup.
3. If this is your first dose from a newly-made colistin solution, place the vial with the rest of the solution in the refrigerator **right away**. Do not freeze it. You will use the 2nd dose in 12 hours.
4. Nebulize the colistin solution until it is all gone.

If your dose is 150 mg twice a day:

You will use a newly-made colistin solution for each dose. There should be no leftover solution.

1. Use the syringe to slowly draw out **4 cc** of the colistin solution.
2. Place the solution in the nebulizer cup.
3. Nebulize the colistin solution until it is all gone.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Cystic Fibrosis Clinic:
206.598.8446

Important: You must throw away any colistin solution that has been mixed for more than 24 hours **or** left out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.