

Caspofungin

Caspofungin (as caspofungin acetate)

50 mg and 70 mg powder for concentrate for infusion

What is in this leaflet

Please read this leaflet carefully before you start using Caspofungin.

This leaflet answers some common questions about Caspofungin. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you using Caspofungin against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about using this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.

What Caspofungin is used for

This medicine contains the active ingredient caspofungin.

Caspofungin is used to treat the following fungal infections:

- Invasive candidiasis, including candidaemia
- Oesophageal candidiasis (Infection of the oesophagus/food pipe)
- Oropharyngeal candidiasis (infection of the mouth)
- Invasive aspergillosis, when other antifungal treatments have not worked or when other antifungal treatments have not been tolerated.

Also, your doctor may suspect that you have a fungal infection in the following situation, and prescribe Caspofungin to treat it.

- Chemotherapy or other medical treatments or conditions can lower the body's resistance to disease by lowering counts of certain white blood cells. If you have persistent fever following chemotherapy or under other conditions as noted above, and your fever is not reduced by treatment with an antibiotic, you may have a fungal infection.

Candidiasis is an infection caused by a fungus (yeast) called candida.

Invasive candidiasis is a serious type of candidiasis which occurs in your bloodstream (referred to as candidaemia), or in tissues or organs such as the lining of the abdomen (peritonitis), the heart, kidneys, liver, bones, muscles, joints, spleen, or eyes.

Candidiasis can also occur in your food pipe, also known as the oesophagus (oesophageal candidiasis). It may cause difficulty or pain when swallowing.

Invasive aspergillosis is an infection caused by a fungus, called *aspergillus* (as-pur-jilus). Most of these infections begin in the respiratory tract (in the nose, sinuses, or lungs) because the spores of the fungus are usually present in the air we breathe.

The spores are harmless in most healthy people due to the body's natural ability to fight disease.

However, invasive aspergillosis can be serious in certain circumstances as it can spread to other tissues and organs. Groups of people who are at increased risk of invasive aspergillosis include those who have poor immune systems, such as people with organ transplants, certain cancers, and HIV/AIDS.

How it works

This medicine belongs to a group of medicines called echinocandins.

It works by interfering with the production of a component of the fungal cell wall that is necessary for the fungus to continue living and growing. Fungal cells exposed to this medicine have incomplete or defective cell walls, making them fragile and unable to grow.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why Caspofungin has been prescribed for you.

Your doctor may have prescribed Caspofungin for another reason.

There is no evidence that this medicine is addictive.

This medicine is available only with a doctor's prescription.

Use in children

The safety and effectiveness of this medicine in neonates and infants under 3 months of age have not been established.

Before you use Caspofungin

When you must not be given it

You must not be given Caspofungin if:

- **You are hypersensitive to, or have had an allergic reaction to, caspofungin or any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.**

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include: cough, shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing; swelling of the face, lips, tongue, throat or other parts of the body; rash, itching or hives on the skin; fainting; or hay fever-like symptoms.

If you think you are having an allergic reaction, contact your medical or nursing staff immediately or go to the Accident and Emergency department at your nearest hospital.

- **The expiry date (EXP) printed on the pack has passed.**
- **The packaging is torn, shows signs of tampering or it does not look quite right.**

Before you are given it

Your doctor must know about all the following before you are given this medicine.

You must tell your doctor if:

- You have allergies to:
 - any other medicines
 - any other substances, such as foods, preservatives or dyes.
- You have or have had any medical conditions, especially liver disease.
- You are currently pregnant or you plan to become pregnant.

Like most medicines, Caspofungin is generally not recommended during pregnancy. However, if there is a need to consider using Caspofungin during pregnancy, your doctor will discuss the possible risks and benefits to you and your unborn baby.

- You are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed.

It is not known whether Caspofungin passes into human breast milk.

- You are taking or are planning to take any other medicines. This includes vitamins and supplements that are available from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell them before you are given Caspofungin

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including medicines that you buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop. You should also tell ant health professional who is prescribing a new medicine for you that you have been given Caspofungin.

Some medicines may interfere with Caspofungin. These include:

- tacrolimus, used to prevent organ transplant rejection or to treat certain problems with the immune system
- efavirenz and nevirapine, used to treat HIV infection
- phenytoin and carbamazepine, used to treat epilepsy and/or convulsions
- rifampicin, an antibiotic used to treat tuberculosis and other infections
- dexamethasone, a corticosteroid medicine used to treat inflammation.

These medicines may be affected by Caspofungin, or may affect how well it works. If you are taking any of these, you may need a different dose or you may need to take different medicines.

Caspofungin should be used with caution with cyclosporin (a medicine used to help prevent organ transplant rejection or to treat certain problems with the immune system) as the combination may cause abnormalities in some tests of your liver function. In addition, using the two medicines together may increase the level of caspofungin in your body.

Other medicines not listed above may also interact with Caspofungin.

Your doctor or pharmacist has more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while being given Caspofungin.

How Caspofungin is given

How much is given

Your doctor will decide what dose and how long you will receive Caspofungin. This depends on your condition and other factors, such as your age, liver function and other medicines that are being given. No dose adjustment is necessary if you are elderly or if you have reduced kidney function.

How it is given

This medicine is given as a slow injection into a vein.

This medicine must only be given by a physician or nurse.

In case of overdose

If you receive too much (overdose)

As Caspofungin is given to you in a hospital under the supervision of your doctor or medical staff, it is very unlikely that you will receive an overdose. You will be closely monitored while in the hospital so that any unwanted side effects can be treated. However, if you experience severe side effects contact your medical or nursing staff immediately.

Symptoms of an overdose may include the side effects listed below in the 'Side Effects' section but are usually of a more severe nature.

Side Effects

Tell your doctor as soon as possible if you do not feel well after you have been given Caspofungin or if you have any questions or concerns.

Do not be alarmed by the following lists of side effects. You may not experience any of them.

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious but most of the time they are not.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you notice any of the following:

- vein irritations where you had the injection, including redness, swelling, or clotting
- headache, dizziness, pain, chills
- nausea, vomiting
- diarrhoea, stomach pain
- flushing, tremor, sweating
- high blood pressure
- aching muscles, joints, or bones
- difficulty sleeping
- swelling of the hands, ankles, or feet.

These are the more common side effects of Caspofungin. For the most part, these have been mild.

Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if you notice any of the following.

These may be serious side effects and you may need medical attention:

- fever that has developed or worsened after starting treatment with Caspofungin
- signs of anaemia such as tiredness, being short of breath, looking pale
- skin rash or itching
- pinkish, itchy swellings on the skin, also called hives or nettlerash
- difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, or faster rate of breathing than usual
- swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing
- fast heart rate
- numbness or tingling in fingers or toes
- rash, skin peeling, mucous membrane sores, hives, large areas of peeling skin.

If you experience any of the following, contact your medical or nursing staff immediately or go to the Accident and Emergency department at your nearest hospital.

These are very serious side effects and you may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation:

- liver problems

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor if you notice any other effects.

Allergic reactions

If you think you are having an allergic reaction to Caspofungin, contact your medical or nursing staff immediately or go to the Accident and Emergency department at your nearest hospital.

Life-threatening allergic reactions have been reported.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include some or all of the following:

- cough, shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue, throat or other parts of the body
- rash, itching or hives on the skin
- fainting
- hay fever-like symptoms.

After using Caspofungin

Storage

This medicine will be stored in the pharmacy or on the ward. It is kept in a refrigerator where the temperature stays between 2-8 °C.

Disposal

Caspofungin is used for one dose in one patient only. Any remaining contents should be discarded.

Product description

What Caspofungin Powder for Concentrate for Infusion looks like

50 mg Powder for Concentrate for Infusion: White to off-white lyophilised powder in a clear glass vial.

70 mg Powder for Concentrate for Infusion: White to off-white lyophilised powder in a clear glass vial.

Ingredients

Active ingredient

Each vial contains 50 mg or 70 mg of caspofungin (as acetate) as the active ingredient.

Inactive ingredients

It also contains the following inactive ingredients:

- sucrose
- mannitol
- glacial acetic acid
- sodium hydroxide

This medicine is gluten-free, lactose-free, tartrazine-free and free of other azo dyes.

Sponsor Details

Caspofungin is supplied in New Zealand by:

Alchemy Health Limited
120 Ngapuhi Road
Remuera
Auckland 1050
NEW ZEALAND

Medical enquires: 0508 ALCHEMY (0508 252436)

Date of Preparation

This leaflet was prepared on 27 March 2023.