

British Columbia Cancer Agency | POLICY

Title: Labelling of Vinca Alkaloid Preparations	Number: V-40
Effective Date: May 27, 1999 Revised Date: 1 Dec 2007; 13 Feb 2008; 1 Sept 2008; Feb 2011	Approved By: Provincial Systemic Program Committee

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Policy

The purpose of this policy is to assist in the prevention of accidental intrathecal injection of vinca alkaloids. For the purpose of this policy, vincristine is differentiated from other vinca alkaloids.

1. Vincristine should be dispensed in 50 mL minibag to be given over 5-15 minutes and labelled with an auxiliary label with the words “WARNING: FOR INTRAVENOUS USE ONLY – FATAL IF GIVEN BY OTHER ROUTES”.
2. Other Vinca Alkaloids dispensed in syringes or minibags are labelled with an auxiliary label with the words “WARNING: FOR INTRAVENOUS USE ONLY – FATAL IF GIVEN BY OTHER ROUTES”.
 - a. The auxiliary labels are placed directly on the syringe barrel so that they are clearly visible to the person administering the drug. This should be done regardless of whether the patient is also scheduled to receive additional medication(s) by the intrathecal route.
 - b. The auxiliary labels are brightly coloured in contrast to the white medication label.

References:

1. Meggs WJ, Hoffman RS. Fatality resulting from intraventricular vincristine administration. J Toxicol Clin Toxicol 1998; 36(3):243-6.
2. Geissler RG, Bergmann L, Hacker H, et al. Severe central nervous adverse effect of intrathecal chemotherapy in a 16-yr-old patient with Burkitt's type lymphoma (letter). Eur J Haem 1997;58(4):286-8.
3. Zaragoza MR, Ritchey ML, Walter A. Neurourologic consequences of accidental intrathecal vincristine: a case report. Med Pediatr Oncol 1995;24(1):61-2.
4. Trinkle R, Wu JK. Errors involving pediatric patients receiving chemotherapy: a literature review. Med Pediatr Oncol 1996;26:344-51.
5. Al Fawaz IM. Fatal myeloencephalopathy due to intrathecal vincristine sulfate. A fatal chemotherapeutic error. Cancer 1983;51:2041-7.
6. Bleck TP, Jacobsen J. Prolonged survival following the inadvertent intrathecal administration of vincristine: clinical and electrophysiologic analyses. Clin Neuropharmacol 1991;14:457-62.
7. World Health Organization. Information Exchange System: Alert No. 115 (QSM/MC/IEA.115). Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 18 July 2007.