Aerosolized Pentamidine

Pentamidine (pen-TAM-i-deen) is a liquid antibiotic breathed into the lungs to prevent or treat a lung infection called *Pneumocystis jiroveci Pneumonia* (PJP). People whose immune systems are weak because of disease, organ transplant or medicines they take are at higher risk for PJP.

**Note:** *P. jiroveci* was formerly named *P. carinii*.

**How long do I have to take Pentamidine?**
Some people take Pentamidine once a month for six months. Others need to do a treatment once a month for a longer time. If you are not sure how long you have to take Pentamidine, please talk with your provider.

**What are the side effects?**
Pentamidine has fewer side effects when it is inhaled. Some of the common side effects include:
- Bitter taste in the mouth
- Dry throat
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness

**How is the Pentamidine given?**
- Before you receive it, the respiratory therapist (RT) will give you a medicine called albuterol. This medicine helps to open up the airways in your lungs so you don’t have a hard time breathing or coughing during the Pentamidine treatment.
- The RT will use a small cup called a nebulizer to give the Pentamidine. When air is attached to the cup, it will cause the liquid Pentamidine to become a mist you can breathe in.
- You will be asked to lie back, so your head is raised no more than 6 inches while you receive this treatment. This is done so when you inhale, most of the medicine will end up in the top of your lungs, where PJP often starts.
- You must put the mouthpiece in your mouth, seal your lips tight around it, and take deep breaths during the treatment. It will take 20-30 minutes for the treatment. When there is no more mist formed, the treatment is done.
- Anyone who is in the room with you while you are taking the treatment will need to wear a special mask. This is to protect them from breathing in the medicine too. Otherwise, they could have the same side effects listed above. Be sure to tell the RT if you or anyone with you might be pregnant. Pregnant or possibly pregnant women should not be in the room when Pentamidine is given.
- If you have trouble breathing, shortness of breath, or chest tightness during or after the treatment, tell the RT right away.
- When the treatment is done, you may take a drink of water, juice, or suck on a piece of candy to get the bitter taste out of your mouth.