Pentamidine Inhalation Treatment

WHY IS THIS TREATMENT DONE:
Pentamidine is given by inhalation is used to prevent lung infection (pneumocystis pneumonia- PCP) in immunocompromised patients for whom pentamidine prophylaxis is deemed beneficial (i.e. oncology patients with primary immunodeficiency’s of those receiving chemotherapy with secondary immunodeficiency’s, bone marrow transplant patients, and patients receiving prolonged administration of high-dose steroids.) Pentamidine belongs to class of drugs known as antiprotozoals. It works by killing the organisms that cause infection.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
The patient will arrive at the hospital and enter at the main entrance. The patient will report in to register and review insurance. The patient should have a copy of the orders as a precaution. The patient will be brought back to the department where we will confirm the patient’s identity, explain the procedure, and review their history.

How the medication is given:
This medication is given by a respiratory therapist as directed by your doctor, usually once every 4 weeks. It is given via nebulizer that changes the solution into fine mist that is inhaled directly into the lungs.

A bronchodilator (Albuterol) is usually given prior to the pentamidine treatment to help open up the airways. It is important to follow all instructions prior to receiving the medication.

During the treatment some patients may feel the urge to spit, since moisture builds up within the nebulizer. Paper towels as well as water are provided to the patient prior to the treatment.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
Each treatment generally takes anywhere from 25-35 minutes. It may take longer if the physician prescribes a bronchodilator to be given prior to the pentamidine.
PREPARATION:
Patient is picked up by respiratory therapist in out patient clinic, and is taken to a separate room where the treatment will be given. A parent or family member may accompany patient while receiving treatment.

PRECAUTIONS:
Acute side effects from the inhalation of pentamidine include difficulty breathing. A Respiratory Therapist will always be in attendance with the patient.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:
Pentamidine prophylaxis is contraindicated in patients with demonstrated hypersensitivity to inhaled or parenteral pentamidine.

MEDICATION ISSUES:
Potential side effects include fatigue, metallic taste, drooling, and shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, pharyngitis, chest pain, pneumothorax, tachycardia, palpitations, syncope, hypertension, gingivitis, dry mouth, confusion, anxiety, seizure, laryngospasm, conjunctivitis and blurred vision.