

DEXAMETHASONE injection – different injection strengths

The Pan Mersey Area Prescribing Committee recommends that dexamethasone injection should be prescribed as dexamethasone or dexamethasone (base) and not as dexamethasone phosphate or dexamethasone sodium phosphate

SAFETY

Staff prescribing, dispensing, and administering dexamethasone injection should be aware of the following:

- > **There are a number of different presentations** of dexamethasone injection now available. These differ in strength, which may create the potential for a patient to receive an incorrect dose. In addition to this, accompanying product information may also cause some misunderstanding.
- > **Prescribers:** to avoid confusion dexamethasone injection should be prescribed as dexamethasone or dexamethasone (base) and not as dexamethasone phosphate or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
- > **Staff administering dexamethasone injection:**
 - if the injection is not prescribed as above - contact the prescriber (or pharmacist in a hospital setting) for clarification and amendment of the instructions to administer
 - if staff administering dexamethasone are unsure of the injection volume to be administered - please confirm this with the prescriber (or pharmacist in a hospital setting) prior to administration
- > **Pharmacists:** please ensure when dispensing that the clinical check includes a check of the strength and dosage in terms of dexamethasone base
- > The information overleaf gives examples of the labelling of six brands of dexamethasone 1ml injection available at the time of writing. Note: There are also other sizes of vials or ampoules. e.g., 2 ml.
- > Always ensure that you consult the most up to date product information for details of the various dexamethasone injections available

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	Dexamethasone base (on packaging)	Volume equivalence to administer 3.3 mg of base	Volume equivalence to administer 4 mg of base	Storage
Aspen	3.8 mg/mL	0.87 mL	1.05 mL	Store in a refrigerator (2-8°C)
Wockhardt	3.3 mg/mL	1 mL	1.2 mL	Store below 25°C
Hameln	3.3 mg/mL	1 mL	1.2 mL	Store below 25°C
Hospira	3.3 mg/mL	1 mL	1.2 mL	Store below 25°C
Panpharma	3.3 mg/mL	1 mL	1.2 mL	Store below 25°C
Noridem Enterprises Ltd / Kent Pharma UK Ltd	3.3 mg/mL	1 mL	1.2 mL	Store below 25°C

References

1. Electronic Medicines Compendium – Summary of product Characteristics for Dexamethasone Injection
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/search?q=dexamethasone+injection> (Aspen; Last Updated on eMC 7-Jan-2019, Hospira UK Ltd; Last Updated on eMC 4-Jun-2021, Wockhardt UK Ltd; Last Updated on eMC 25-May-2017, hameln pharmaceuticals ltd; Last Updated on eMC 9-Mar-2021, Panpharma UK Ltd; Last Updated on eMC 26-Jan-2021, Noridem Enterprises Ltd/ Kent Pharma UK Ltd; Last Updated on eMC 7-Jun-2021)
2. Electronic BNF – Dexamethasone Injection (accessed July 2021)
<https://www.medicinescomplete.com/mc/bnf/current/>