Preparations

USP 31: Penicillin V Benzathine Oral Suspension.

Proprietary Preparations (details are given in Part 3)
Austral.: Abbocillin-V; Cilicaine V; ***Austria:*** Ospen; ***Canad.:*** Pen-Vee†; ***Cz.:*** Ospen; ***Fr.:*** Oracilline; ***Ger.:*** InfectoBicillin; ***Gr.:*** Ospen; ***Hung.:*** Ospen; Oxybion†; ***Pol.:*** Ospen; ***Rus.:*** Ospen (Оспен); ***Spain:*** Benoral; ***Switz.:*** Ospen; Phenocillin; ***Turk.:*** Pen-Os; ***Venez.:*** Ospen.

Benzylpenicillin *(BAN, rINN)*

Bencilpenicilina; Bensylpenicillin; Bentsyylipenisilliini; Benzil Penisiliin; Benzylpénicilline; Benzylpenicillinum; Crystalline Penicillin G; Penicillin; Penicillin G; Penisilin G. (2*S*,5*R*,6*R*)-3,3-Dimethyl-7-oxo-6-(2-phenylacetamido)-4-thia-1-azabicyclo[3.2.0]heptane-2-carboxylic acid; (6*R*)-6-(2-Phenylacetamido)penicillanic acid.

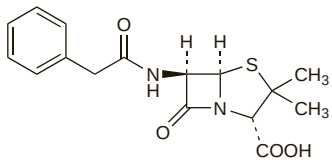
Бензилпенициллин

$C_{16}H_{18}N_2O_4S$ = 334.4.

CAS — 61-33-6.

ATC — J01CE01; S01AA14.

ATC Vet — QJ01CE01; QJ51CE01; QS01AA14.



Description. The name benzylpenicillin is commonly used to describe either benzylpenicillin potassium or benzylpenicillin sodium as these are the forms in which benzylpenicillin is used. In *Martindale*, benzylpenicillin means either the potassium or sodium salt.

Benzylpenicillin Potassium *(BANM, rINNM)*

Bencilpenicilina potásica; Bensylpenicillinkalium; Bentsyylipenisilliinikalium; Benzilpenicilino kalio druska; Benzilpenicillin-kálium; Benzylopenicylina potasowa; Benzylpenicilin draselná sůl; Benzylpénicilline potassique; Benzylpenicillinum kalicum; Kalii Benzylpenicillinum; Penicillin G Potassium; Penisilin G Potasyum.

Калия Бензилпенициллин

$C_{16}H_{17}KN_2O_4S$ = 372.5.

CAS — 113-98-4.

ATC — J01CE01; S01AA14.

ATC Vet — QJ01CE01; QS01AA14.

Pharmacopoeias. In *Chin.*, *Eur.* (see p.vii), *Int.*, *Jpn*, *US*, and *Viet.*

Ph. Eur. 6.2 (Benzylpenicillin Potassium). The potassium salt of a substance produced by growing certain strains of *Penicillium notatum* or related organisms or obtained by any other means. A white or almost white crystalline powder. Very soluble in water; practically insoluble in fatty oils and in liquid paraffin. A 10% solution in water has a pH of 5.5 to 7.5. Store in airtight containers.

USP 31 (Penicillin G Potassium). Colourless or white crystals, or white crystalline powder. It is odourless or practically so, and is moderately hygroscopic. Very soluble in water, in sodium chloride 0.9%, and in glucose solutions; sparingly soluble in alcohol. Its solutions retain substantially full potency for several days at temperatures below 15°, but are rapidly inactivated by acids, by alkali hydroxides, by glycerol, and by oxidising agents. pH of a 6% solution in water is between 5.0 and 7.5. Store in airtight containers.

Incompatibility and stability. As for Benzylpenicillin Sodium, below.

Benzylpenicillin Sodium *(BANM, rINNM)*

Bencilpenicilina sódica; Bensylpenicillinnatrium; Bentsyylipenisilliininatrium; Benzilpenicilino natrio druska; Benzilpenicillin-nátrium; Benzylopenicylina sodowa; Benzylpenicilin sodná sůl; Benzylpénicilline sodique; Benzylpenicillinum natricum; Natrii Benzylpenicillinum; Penicillin G Sodium; Sodyum Penisilin G.

Натрий Бензилпенициллин

$C_{16}H_{17}N_2NaO_4S$ = 356.4.

CAS — 69-57-8.

ATC — J01CE01; S01AA14.

ATC Vet — QJ01CE01; QS01AA14.

Pharmacopoeias. In *Chin.*, *Eur.* (see p.vii), *Int.*, *US*, and *Viet.*

Ph. Eur. 6.2 (Benzylpenicillin Sodium). The sodium salt of a substance produced by growing certain strains of *Penicillium notatum* or related organisms or obtained by any other means. A white or almost white crystalline powder. Very soluble in water; practically insoluble in fatty oils and in liquid paraffin. A 10% solution in water has a pH of 5.5 to 7.5. Store in airtight containers.

USP 31 (Penicillin G Sodium). Colourless or white crystals, or white to slightly yellow crystalline powder. It is odourless or practically so, and is moderately hygroscopic. Its solutions lose potency fairly rapidly at room temperature, but retain substantially full potency for several days at temperatures below 15°. Its solutions are rapidly inactivated by acids, by alkali hydroxides, by oxidising agents, and by penicillinase. pH of a 6% solution in water is between 5.0 and 7.5. Store in airtight containers.

Incompatibility. Benzylpenicillin has been reported to be incompatible with metal ions and some rubber products. Its stability may be affected by ionic and nonionic surfactants, oxidising and reducing agents, alcohols, glycerol, glycols, macrogols and other hydroxy compounds, some paraffins and bases, some preservatives such as chlorocresol or thiomersal, carbohydrate solutions in an alkaline pH, fat emulsions, blood and blood products, and viscosity modifiers. Benzylpenicillin is incompatible with a wide range of acidic and basic drugs (see Stability, below) and with a number of other antimicrobials, including amphotericin B, some cephalosporins, and vancomycin. Benzylpenicillin and aminoglycosides are mutually incompatible and injections should be given at separate sites.

Stability. Benzylpenicillin is hydrolysed in aqueous solutions by degradation of the beta-lactam ring and hydrolysis is accelerated by increased temperature or alkaline conditions; inactivation also occurs under acid conditions. Degradation products include penillic, penicillenic, and penicilloic acids which lower the pH and cause a progressive increase in the rate of deterioration; *N*-formylpenicillamine and very small amounts of penicillamine have also been detected. Degradation is minimal at about pH 6.8 and deterioration of benzylpenicillin in solution may be retarded by using a citrate buffer. Dilute solutions are more stable than concentrated ones.

References.

1. Lynn B. The stability and administration of intravenous penicillins. *Br J Intraven Ther* 1981; **2** (Mar): 22–39.
2. Bird AE, *et al.* N-Formylpenicillamine and penicillamine as degradation products of penicillins in solution. *J Pharm Pharmacol* 1986; **38:** 913–17.

Units

The second International Standard Preparation (1952) of benzylpenicillin sodium contained 1670 units of penicillin per mg but was withdrawn in 1968 since penicillin can now be characterised completely by chemical tests. Despite this, doses of benzylpenicillin are still expressed in units in some countries.

Benzylpenicillin potassium 600 mg or benzylpenicillin sodium 600 mg have generally been considered to be equivalent to about 1 million units (1 mega unit).

Adverse Effects

The most common adverse effects of benzylpenicillin are hypersensitivity reactions, especially skin rashes; anaphylaxis occasionally occurs and has sometimes been fatal.

Gastrointestinal effects such as diarrhoea and nausea are the most common adverse effects after oral use of benzylpenicillin; a sore mouth or tongue or a black hairy tongue have occasionally been reported. Pseudomembranous colitis has been associated with the use of most antibiotics; ampicillin or amoxicillin are the most frequently implicated penicillins (see Antibiotic-associated Colitis, p.171).

Other adverse effects have generally been associated with large intravenous doses of benzylpenicillin; patients with renal impairment are also at increased risk. These adverse effects include haemolytic anaemia and neutropenia, both of which might have some immunological basis; prolongation of bleeding time and defective platelet function; convulsions and other signs of CNS toxicity (encephalopathy has followed intrathecal dosage and can be fatal); and electrolyte disturbances because of the large amounts of potassium or sodium given when benzylpenicillin potassium or sodium, respectively, are used.

Hepatitis and cholestatic jaundice have been reported rarely with some penicillins, notably penicillinase-resistant penicillins such as flucloxacillin and oxacillin, and also combinations of amoxicillin or ticarcillin with clavulanic acid.

Nephropathy and interstitial nephritis, which may have some immunological basis, have been especially associated with meticillin, but may be produced by other penicillins.

Some patients with syphilis and other spirochaete infections may experience a Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction shortly after starting treatment with penicillin, which is probably due to the release of endotoxins from the killed treponemes and should not be mistaken for a hypersensitivity reaction. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, and reactions at the site of the lesions. The reaction can be dangerous in cardiovascular syphilis, or where there is a serious risk of increased local damage, such as with optic atrophy.

Hypersensitivity. The overall incidence of allergic reactions to penicillin has been reported to vary from about 1 to 10% although some patients may have been incorrectly labelled 'allergic to penicillin'. Anaphylactic reactions occur in about 0.05% of patients, usually after parenteral use, but they have also been reported after taking oral penicillin.

Hypersensitivity to penicillin gives rise to immediate reactions including anaphylaxis, angioedema, urticaria, and some maculopapular rashes. Late reactions may include serum sickness-like reactions and haemolytic anaemia. Reactions are considered to be due mainly to breakdown products produced *in vitro* before use or to metabolites of penicillin, and possibly penicillin itself. These act as haptens which, when combined with proteins and other macromolecules, produce potential antigens. As the hypersensitivity is related to the basic penicillin structure, patients who are genuinely allergic to benzylpenicillin must be assumed to be allergic to all penicillins; sensitised patients may also react to the cephalosporins and other beta-lactam antibiotics.

Tests for hypersensitivity may be used to determine those patients most likely to develop serious allergic reactions to penicillins. Skin tests are used to evaluate the current risk of immediate or accelerated IgE-mediated reactions, the most serious being anaphylaxis. Both the major and minor determinants of penicillin hypersensitivity should be used; the major determinant is available as penicilloyl-polylysine (p.2364) and a minor-determinant mixture consisting of benzylpenicillin and its derivatives, including penicilloic acid and benzylpenicilloylamine, can be used, although if this is not available a solution of benzylpenicillin may be substituted. Adrenaline should be available in case an anaphylactic reaction develops. The results of skin tests are unreliable if a significant time has elapsed before beginning therapy. A number of *in-vitro* tests including the radioallergosorbent test (RAST) have been developed.

Desensitisation may be attempted in patients allergic to penicillin when treatment with penicillin is considered essential. It involves very small doses of penicillin given at relatively short intervals of 15 minutes or more, and gradually increased to therapeutic concentrations. However, desensitisation may be hazardous and should only be carried out if the patient can be monitored continuously and adrenaline and resuscitation equipment are immediately available. Desensitisation should be regarded as temporary, and allergic reactions may recur during the next exposure to penicillin.

Neutropenia. Neutropenia has been widely reported in patients given high doses of beta lactams and an incidence of from 5 to more than 15% has been reported in patients treated for 10 days or more. Warning signs include fever, rash, and eosinophilia. Monitoring of the leucocyte count is recommended during long-term treatment with high doses. Some have proposed a direct toxic effect whereas others have postulated an immune mechanism.

Effects on the blood. References to neutropenia associated with penicillins.

1. Anonymous. Antibiotic-induced neutropenia. *Lancet* 1985; **ii:** 814.
2. Neftel KA, *et al.* Inhibition of granulopoiesis in vivo and in vitro by β-lactam antibiotics. *J Infect Dis* 1985; **152:** 90–8.
3. Olaison L, Alestig K. A prospective study of neutropenia induced by high doses of β-lactam antibiotics. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 1990; **25:** 449–53.
4. Scheetz MH, *et al.* Systematic review of piperacillin-induced neutropenia. *Drug Safety* 2007; **30:** 295–306.