

preventing thrombosis in children requiring chemotherapy and following surgery; and for systemic venous thromboembolism secondary to inherited thrombophilias, systemic lupus erythematosus, or indwelling central venous catheters.

Heparin

Heparin initiates anticoagulation rapidly but has a short duration of action. It is now often referred to as being **standard** or heparin (unfractionated) p. 97 to distinguish it from the **low molecular weight heparins**, which have a longer duration of action. For children at high risk of bleeding, heparin (unfractionated) is more suitable than low molecular weight heparin because its effect can be terminated rapidly by stopping the infusion.

Heparins are used in both the treatment and prophylaxis of thromboembolic disease, mainly to prevent further clotting rather than to lyse existing clots—surgery or a thrombolytic drug may be necessary if a thrombus obstructs major vessels.

Low molecular weight heparins

Dalteparin sodium p. 96, enoxaparin sodium p. 96, and tinzaparin sodium p. 98 are low molecular weight heparins used for treatment and prophylaxis of thrombotic episodes in children. Their duration of action is longer than that of heparin (unfractionated) and in adults and older children *once-daily subcutaneous* dosage is sometimes possible; however, younger children require relatively higher doses (possibly due to larger volume of distribution, altered heparin pharmacokinetics, or lower plasma concentrations of antithrombin) and twice daily dosage is sometimes necessary. Low molecular weight heparins are convenient to use, especially in children with poor venous access.

Heparinoids

Danaparoid sodium p. 95 is a heparinoid that has a role in children who develop heparin-induced thrombocytopenia, providing they have no evidence of cross-reactivity.

Heparin flushes

The use of heparin flushes should be kept to a minimum. For maintaining patency of peripheral venous catheters, sodium chloride injection 0.9% is as effective as heparin flushes. The role of heparin flushes in maintaining patency of arterial and central venous catheters is unclear.

Epoprostenol

Epoprostenol p. 120 (prostacyclin) can be given to inhibit platelet aggregation during renal dialysis when heparins are unsuitable or contra-indicated. It is a potent vasodilator and therefore its side-effects include flushing, headache and hypotension.

Other drugs used for Thromboembolism Alteplase, p. 89 · Streptokinase, p. 90

ANTITHROMBOTIC DRUGS > ANTIPLATELET DRUGS

Antiplatelet drugs

Overview

Antiplatelet drugs decrease platelet aggregation and inhibit thrombus formation in the arterial circulation, because in faster-flowing vessels, thrombi are composed mainly of platelets with little fibrin.

Aspirin below has limited use in children because it has been associated with Reye's syndrome. Aspirin-containing preparations should not be given to children and adolescents under 16 years, unless specifically indicated, such as for

Kawasaki disease, for prophylaxis of clot formation after cardiac surgery, or for prophylaxis of stroke in children at high risk.

If aspirin causes dyspepsia, or if the child is at a high risk of gastro-intestinal bleeding, a proton pump inhibitor or a H₂-receptor antagonist can be added.

Dipyridamol p. 94 is also used as an antiplatelet drug to prevent clot formation after cardiac surgery and may be used with specialist advice for treatment of persistent coronary artery aneurysms in Kawasaki disease.

Kawasaki disease

Initial treatment is with high dose aspirin and a single dose of intravenous normal immunoglobulin; this combination has an additive anti-inflammatory effect resulting in faster resolution of fever and a decreased incidence of coronary artery complications. After the acute phase, when the patient is afebrile, aspirin is continued at a lower dose to prevent coronary artery abnormalities.

Advanced Pharmacy Services

Children taking antiplatelet drugs may be eligible for the New Medicines Service / Medicines Use Review service provided by a community pharmacist. For further information, see *Advanced Pharmacy Services* in Guidance on prescribing p. 1.

Aspirin

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(Acetylsalicylic Acid)

● INDICATIONS AND DOSE

Antiplatelet | Prevention of thrombus formation after cardiac surgery

► BY MOUTH

► Neonate: 1–5 mg/kg once daily.

► Child 1 month–11 years: 1–5 mg/kg once daily (max. per dose 75 mg)

► Child 12–17 years: 75 mg once daily

Kawasaki disease

► BY MOUTH

► Neonate: Initially 8 mg/kg 4 times a day for 2 weeks or until afebrile, followed by 5 mg/kg once daily for 6–8 weeks, if no evidence of coronary lesions after 8 weeks, discontinue treatment or seek expert advice.

► Child 1 month–11 years: Initially 7.5–12.5 mg/kg 4 times a day for 2 weeks or until afebrile, then 2–5 mg/kg once daily for 6–8 weeks, if no evidence of coronary lesions after 8 weeks, discontinue treatment or seek expert advice

● **UNLICENSED USE** Not licensed for use in children under 16 years.

● **CONTRA-INDICATIONS** Active peptic ulceration · bleeding disorders (antiplatelet dose) · children under 16 years (risk of Reye's syndrome) · haemophilia · previous peptic ulceration (analgesic dose) · severe cardiac failure (analgesic dose)

CONTRA-INDICATIONS, FURTHER INFORMATION

► **Reye's syndrome** Owing to an association with Reye's syndrome, aspirin-containing preparations should not be given to children under 16 years, unless specifically indicated, e.g. for Kawasaki disease.

● **CAUTIONS** Allergic disease · anaemia · asthma · dehydration · G6PD deficiency · preferably avoid during fever or viral infection in children (risk of Reye's syndrome) · previous peptic ulceration (but manufacturers may advise avoidance of low-dose aspirin in history of peptic ulceration) · thyrotoxicosis · uncontrolled hypertension