

Acetadote® Update

Acetadote® (acetylcysteine injection) is approved for the treatment of acetaminophen overdoses. It is effective in preventing and limiting the hepatic injury associated with acetaminophen toxicity, especially when initiated within 8-10 hours after the ingestion. Advantages to giving acetylcysteine intravenously instead of orally include a shorter administration time and the avoidance of vomiting, which can decrease the effectiveness of oral acetylcysteine.

In February 2006, the FDA approved changes in the administration of Acetadote and in information that appears in the package insert, available in products later this year. Some of these additions are:

- **Pediatric patients**—Acetadote is now approved for patients < 40 kg. Dosing is similar to that used in adults, however, consideration is given to the volume of IV fluids in small children.
- **Loading dose infusion**—The administration time of the loading dose has been extended to 60 minutes to reduce the chance of the patient developing an anaphylactoid reaction. The total Acetadote administration time is now 21 hours.
- **Compatibility**—Acetadote has been found to be compatible with 5% dextrose, 0.45% sodium chloride (1/2 normal saline) and water for injection.
- **Osmolarity**—The new package insert indicates that Acetadote is a hyperosmolar solution.
- **Color change**—Acetadote can appear to change from colorless to slight pink or purple when the stopper is punctured, without any change in the quality of the product.

For more information on Acetadote and to download the new package insert, go to www.Acetadote.com or call the **Maryland Poison Center** at 1-800-222-1222.

DID YOU KNOW THAT... 158 patients that the Maryland Poison Center was consulted on received IV acetylcysteine in 2005?

A greater number of patients (236) received oral acetylcysteine in 2005; however, as hospitals add Acetadote to their formularies and as physicians become more familiar with the product, it's likely that more patients will be given IV acetylcysteine. To schedule an inservice for your staff on the treatment of acetaminophen overdoses, contact Lisa Booze at lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu or 410-563-5583.

