



Diclofenac sodium

Voltaren®

25 mg/mL Solution for Injection (I.M./I.V.)

Non-Opioid Analgesics



FORMULATION AND DESCRIPTION

Pharmaceutical form

Solution for injection.

Active substance

The active substance is diclofenac sodium.

Each ampoule (3 mL) contains 75 mg of diclofenac sodium.

Active moiety

Diclofenac

Excipients

Mannitol; sodium metabisulphite (E223); benzyl alcohol; propylene glycol; water for injection; sodium hydroxide.

Pharmaceutical formulations may vary between countries.

INDICATIONS

Intramuscular injection

Treatment of:

- Exacerbations of inflammatory and degenerative forms of rheumatism: rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, osteoarthritis, spondylarthritis, painful syndromes of the vertebral column, non-articular rheumatism.
- Acute attacks of gout.
- Renal colic and biliary colic.
- Post-traumatic and post-operative pain, inflammation and swelling.
- Severe migraine attacks.

Intravenous infusion

Treatment or prevention of post-operative pain in a hospital setting.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Dosage

As a general recommendation, the dose should be individually adjusted. Adverse effects may be minimized by using the lowest effective dose for the shortest duration necessary to control symptoms (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

General target population: adults

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection should not be given for more than 2 days; if necessary, treatment can be continued with diclofenac (Voltaren®) tablets or suppositories.

Special populations

Pediatric patients (below 18 years of age)

Because of their dosage strength, the ampoules of diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection are not suitable for children and adolescents.

Geriatric patients (aged 65 years or above)

No adjustment of the starting dose is generally required for elderly patients. However, caution is indicated on basic medical grounds, especially for frail elderly patients or those with a low body weight (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Established cardiovascular disease or significant cardiovascular risk factors

Treatment with diclofenac (Voltaren®) is generally not recommended in patients with established cardiovascular disease or uncontrolled hypertension. If needed, patients with established cardiovascular disease, uncontrolled hypertension, or significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease should be treated with diclofenac (Voltaren®) only after careful consideration and only at doses ≤ 100 mg daily if treated for more than 4 weeks (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Renal impairment

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) is contraindicated in patients with renal failure (GFR < 15 mL/min/1.73m²)(see section CONTRAINDICATIONS).

No specific studies have been carried out in patients with renal impairment, therefore, no specific dose adjustment recommendations can be made. Caution is advised when

administering diclofenac (Voltaren®) to patients with renal impairment (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Hepatic impairment

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) is contraindicated in patients with hepatic failure (see section CONTRAINDICATIONS).

No specific studies have been carried out in patients with hepatic impairment, therefore, no specific dose adjustment recommendations can be made. Caution is advised when administering diclofenac (Voltaren®) to patients with mild to moderate hepatic impairment (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Method of administration

Intramuscular injection

The following directions for intramuscular injection must be followed in order to avoid damage to a nerve or other tissue at the injection site (which may result in muscle weakness, muscle paralysis, hypoesthesia and Embolia cutis medicamentosa (Nicolau syndrome)).

The dose is generally one 75 mg ampoule daily, given by deep intragluteal injection into the upper outer quadrant using aseptic technique. In severe cases (e.g. colic), the daily dose can exceptionally be increased to two injections of 75 mg, separated by an interval of a few hours (one into each buttock). Alternatively, one ampoule of 75 mg can be combined with other pharmaceutical forms of diclofenac (Voltaren®) (e.g. tablets, suppositories) up to a total maximum daily dose of 150 mg.

In migraine attacks, clinical experience is limited to initial use of one ampoule of 75 mg administered as soon as possible, followed by suppositories up to 100 mg on the same day if required. The total dose should not exceed 175 mg on the first day.

Intravenous infusion

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection must not be given as an intravenous bolus injection.

Immediately before starting an intravenous infusion, diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection must be diluted with saline 0.9% or glucose 5% infusion solution buffered with sodium bicarbonate according to the instructions given in section INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND HANDLING.

Two alternative dosage regimens of diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection are recommended.

For the *treatment* of moderate to severe post-operative pain, 75 mg should be infused continuously over a period of 30 minutes to 2 hours. If necessary, treatment may be repeated after a few hours, but the dose should not exceed 150 mg within any period of 24 hours.

For the *prevention* of post-operative pain, a loading dose of 25 mg to 50 mg should be infused after surgery over 15 minutes to 1 hour, followed by a continuous infusion of about 5 mg per hour up to a maximum daily dose of 150 mg.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Known hypersensitivity to the active substance, sodium metabisulphite or to any of the other excipients.
- Active gastric or intestinal ulcer, bleeding or perforation (see sections WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS and ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS).
- Last trimester of pregnancy (see section WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING POTENTIAL, PREGNANCY, BREAST-FEEDING AND FERTILITY).
- Hepatic failure.
- Renal failure (GFR <15 mL/min/1.73m²).
- Severe cardiac failure (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).
- Like other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), diclofenac (Voltaren®) is also contraindicated in patients in whom the use of acetylsalicylic acid or other NSAIDs can precipitate asthma, angioedema, urticaria, or acute rhinitis (i.e. NSAID-induced cross-sensitivity reactions (see sections WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS and ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS)).

WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

Gastrointestinal effects

Gastrointestinal bleeding ulceration or perforation, which can be fatal, have been reported with all NSAIDs, including diclofenac, and may occur at any time during treatment, with or without warning symptoms or a previous history of serious gastrointestinal events. They generally have more serious consequences in the elderly. If gastrointestinal bleeding or ulceration occurs in patients receiving diclofenac (Voltaren®), the treatment should be discontinued.

As with all NSAIDs, including diclofenac, close medical surveillance is imperative and particular caution should be exercised when prescribing diclofenac (Voltaren®) in patients with symptoms indicative of gastrointestinal (GI) disorders or with a history suggestive of gastric or intestinal ulceration, bleeding or perforation, (see section ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS). The risk of GI bleeding is higher with increasing NSAID doses and in patients with a history of ulcer, particularly if complicated with hemorrhage or perforation and in the elderly.

To reduce the risk of GI toxicity in patients with a history of ulcer, particularly if complicated with hemorrhage or perforation, and in the elderly, the treatment should be initiated and maintained at the lowest effective dose.

Combination therapy with protective agents (e.g. proton pump inhibitors or misoprostol) should be considered for these patients, and also for patients requiring concomitant use of low-dose acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), or other drugs likely to increase gastrointestinal risk.

Patients with a history of GI toxicity, particularly the elderly, should report any unusual abdominal symptoms (especially GI bleeding). Caution is recommended in patients receiving concomitant medications which could increase the risk of ulceration or bleeding, such as systemic corticosteroids, anticoagulants, anti-platelet agents or selective serotonin-reuptake inhibitors (see section INTERACTIONS).

Close medical surveillance and caution should also be exercised in patients with ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, as their condition may be exacerbated (see section ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS).

NSAIDs, including diclofenac, may be associated with increased risk of gastro-intestinal anastomotic leak. Close medical surveillance and caution are recommended when using Voltaren after gastro-intestinal surgery.

Cardiovascular effects

Treatment with NSAIDs including diclofenac, particularly at high dose and in long term, may be associated with a small increased risk of serious cardiovascular thrombotic events (including myocardial infarction and stroke).

Treatment with diclofenac (Voltaren®) is generally not recommended in patients with established cardiovascular disease (congestive heart failure, established ischemic heart disease, peripheral arterial disease) or uncontrolled hypertension. If needed, patients with established cardiovascular disease, uncontrolled hypertension, or significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease (e.g. hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus and smoking) should be treated with diclofenac (Voltaren®) only after careful consideration and only at doses ≤100 mg daily when treatment continues for more than 4 weeks.

As the cardiovascular risks of diclofenac may increase with dose and duration of exposure, the lowest effective daily dose should be used for the shortest duration possible. The patient's need for symptomatic relief and response to therapy should be re-evaluated periodically, especially when treatment continues for more than 4 weeks.

Patients should remain alert for the signs and symptoms of serious arteriothrombotic events (e.g. chest pain, shortness of breath, weakness, slurring of speech), which can occur without warnings. Patients should be instructed to see a physician immediately in case of such an event.

Hematologic effects

During prolonged treatment with diclofenac (Voltaren®), as with other NSAIDs, monitoring of the blood count is recommended.

Like other NSAIDs, diclofenac may temporarily inhibit platelet aggregation. Patients with defects of hemostasis should be carefully monitored.

Respiratory effects (pre-existing asthma)

In patients with asthma, seasonal allergic rhinitis, swelling of the nasal mucosa (i.e. nasal polyps), chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases or chronic infections of the respiratory tract (especially if linked to allergic rhinitis-like symptoms), reactions on NSAIDs like asthma exacerbations (so-called intolerance to analgesics / analgesics-asthma), Quincke's edema or urticaria are more frequent than in other patients. Therefore special caution is recommended in such patients (readiness for emergency). This is applicable as well for patients who are allergic to other substances, e.g. with skin reactions, pruritus or urticaria.

Special caution is recommended when diclofenac (Voltaren®) is used parenterally in patients with bronchial asthma because symptoms may be exacerbated.

Hepatobiliary effects

Close medical surveillance is required when prescribing diclofenac (Voltaren®) to patients with impaired hepatic function, as their condition may be exacerbated.

As with other NSAIDs, including diclofenac, values of one or more liver enzymes may increase. During prolonged treatment with diclofenac (Voltaren®) (e.g. in the form of tablets or suppositories), regular monitoring of hepatic function is indicated as a precautionary measure. If abnormal liver function tests persist or worsen, if clinical signs or symptoms consistent with liver disease develop, or if other manifestations occur (e.g. eosinophilia, rash), diclofenac (Voltaren®) should be discontinued. Hepatitis may occur with use of diclofenac without prodromal symptoms.

Caution is called for when using diclofenac (Voltaren®) in patients with hepatic porphyria, since it may trigger an attack.

Skin reactions

Serious skin reactions, some of them fatal, including exfoliative dermatitis, Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis, have been reported very rarely in association with the use of NSAIDs, including diclofenac (Voltaren®) (see section ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS). Patients appear to be at highest risk of these reactions early in the course of therapy, the onset of the reaction occurring in the majority of cases within the first month of treatment. diclofenac (Voltaren®) should be discontinued at the first appearance of skin rash, mucosal lesions or any other sign of hypersensitivity.

As with other NSAIDs, allergic reactions, including anaphylactic/anaphylactoid reactions, can also occur in rare cases with diclofenac without earlier exposure to the drug.

Renal effects

As fluid retention and edema have been reported in association with NSAID therapy, including diclofenac, particular caution is called for in patients with impaired cardiac or renal function, history of hypertension, the elderly, patients receiving concomitant treatment with diuretics or medicinal products that can significantly impact renal function, and in those patients with substantial extracellular volume depletion of any cause, e.g. before or after major surgery (see section CONTRAINDICATIONS). Monitoring of renal function is recommended as a precautionary measure when using diclofenac (Voltaren®) in such cases. Discontinuation of therapy is usually followed by recovery to the pre-treatment state.

Injection site reactions

Injection site reactions have been reported after the administration of Voltaren intramuscularly, including injection site necrosis and embolia cutis medicamentosa, also known as Nicolau Syndrome (particularly after inadvertent subcutaneous administration). Appropriate needle selection and injection technique should be followed during i.m. administration of Voltaren (see section PHARMACEUTICAL INFORMATION – instructions for use and handling).

Geriatric patients

Caution is indicated in the elderly on basic medical grounds, especially in frail elderly patients or those with a low body weight.

Interactions with NSAIDs

The concomitant use of diclofenac (Voltaren®) with systemic NSAIDs including cyclooxygenase-2 selective inhibitors, should be avoided due to undesirable effects (see section INTERACTIONS).

Special excipients

The sodium metabisulphite in the solution for injection can lead to isolated severe hypersensitivity reactions and bronchospasm.

Masking signs of infections

Like other NSAIDs, diclofenac may mask the signs and symptoms of infection due to its pharmacodynamic properties.

ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS

Tabulated summary of adverse drug reactions

Adverse drug reactions from clinical trials and/or spontaneous or literature cases (Table 1) are listed by MedDRA system organ class. Within each system organ class, the adverse drug reactions are ranked by frequency, with the most frequent reactions first. Within each frequency grouping, adverse drug reactions are presented in order of decreasing seriousness. In addition, the corresponding frequency category for each adverse drug reaction is based on the following convention (CIOMS III): very common ($\geq 1/10$); common ($\geq 1/100$ to $< 1/10$); uncommon ($\geq 1/1,000$ to $< 1/100$); rare ($\geq 1/10,000$ to $< 1/1,000$); very rare ($< 1/10,000$).

The following undesirable effects include those reported with the solution for injection and/or other pharmaceutical forms of diclofenac, with either short-term or long-term use.

Table 1 Adverse drug reactions

Infections and infestations	
Very rare:	Injection site abscess.
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	
Very rare:	Thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, anemia (including hemolytic and aplastic anemia), agranulocytosis.
Immune system disorders	
Rare:	Hypersensitivity, anaphylactic and anaphylactoid reactions (including hypotension and shock).
Very rare:	Angioedema (including face edema).
Psychiatric disorders	
Very rare:	Disorientation, depression, insomnia, nightmare, irritability, psychotic disorder.
Nervous system disorders	
Common:	Headache, dizziness.
Rare:	Somnolence.
Very rare:	Paresthesia, memory impairment, convulsion, anxiety, tremor, aseptic meningitis, dysgeusia, cerebrovascular accident.
Eye disorders	
Very rare:	Visual impairment, blurred vision, diplopia.
Ear and labyrinth disorders	
Common :	Vertigo.
Very rare:	Tinnitus, impaired hearing.
Cardiac disorders	
Uncommon*:	Myocardial infarction, cardiac failure, palpitations, chest pain
Frequency not known:	Kounis syndrome

Vascular disorders	
Very rare:	Hypertension, vasculitis.
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	
Rare:	Asthma (including dyspnoea).
Very rare:	Pneumonitis.
Gastrointestinal disorders	
Common:	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dyspepsia, abdominal pain, flatulence, decreased appetite.
Rare:	Gastritis, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, hematemesis, hemorrhagic diarrhoea, melena, gastrointestinal ulcer (with or without bleeding, gastrointestinal stenosis or perforation, which may lead to peritonitis).
Very rare:	Colitis (including hemorrhagic colitis, ischemic colitis and exacerbation of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease), constipation, stomatitis, glossitis, esophageal disorder, intestinal diaphragm disease, pancreatitis.
Hepatobiliary disorders	
Common:	Transaminases increased.
Rare:	Hepatitis, jaundice, liver disorder.
Very rare:	Fulminant hepatitis, hepatic necrosis, hepatic failure
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	
Common:	Rash.
Rare:	Urticaria.
Very rare:	Bullous dermatitis bullous, eczema, erythema, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis (Lyell's syndrome), exfoliative dermatitis, alopecia, photosensitivity reaction, purpura, Henoch-Schonlein purpura, pruritus.
Renal and urinary disorders	
Very rare:	Acute kidney injury (acute renal failure), hematuria, proteinuria, nephrotic syndrome, tubulointerstitial nephritis, renal papillary necrosis.
General disorders and administration site conditions	
Common:	Injection site reaction, injection site pain, injection site induration.
Rare:	Edema, injection site necrosis.

* The frequency reflects data from long-term treatment with a high dose (150 mg/day).

Adverse drug reactions from post-marketing experience (frequency not known)

The following adverse drug reaction has been derived from post-marketing experience with Voltaren. Because this reaction was reported voluntarily from a population of uncertain size, it is not possible to reliably estimate its frequency which is therefore categorized as not known.

Table 2 Adverse drug reaction derived from post-marketing experience (frequency not known)

Injection site reactions

Embolia cutis medicamentosa (Nicolau syndrome).

Description of selected adverse drug reactions

Arteriothrombotic events

Meta-analysis and pharmacoepidemiological data point towards a small increased risk of arteriothrombotic events (for example myocardial infarction) associated with the use of diclofenac, particularly at a high dose (150 mg daily) and during long-term treatment (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Visual effects

Visual disturbances such as visual impairment, blurred vision or diplopia appear to be NSAID class effects and are usually reversible on discontinuation. A likely mechanism for the visual disturbances is the inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis and other related compounds that alter the regulation of retinal blood flow resulting in potential changes in vision. If such symptoms occur during diclofenac treatment, an ophthalmological examination may be considered to exclude other causes.

INTERACTIONS

The following interactions include those observed with the solution for injection and/or other pharmaceutical forms of diclofenac.

Observed interactions to be considered

CYP2C9 inhibitors: Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inhibitors (such as voriconazole), which could result in a significant increase in peak plasma concentrations and exposure to diclofenac.

Lithium: If used concomitantly, diclofenac may raise plasma concentrations of lithium. Monitoring of the serum lithium level is recommended.

Digoxin: If used concomitantly, diclofenac may raise plasma concentrations of digoxin. Monitoring of the serum digoxin level is recommended.

Diuretics and antihypertensive agents: Like other NSAIDs, concomitant use of diclofenac with diuretics or antihypertensive agents (e.g. beta-blockers, angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors) may cause a decrease in their antihypertensive effect. Therefore, the combination should be administered with caution and patients, especially the elderly, should have their blood pressure periodically monitored. Patients should be adequately hydrated and consideration should be given to monitoring of renal function after initiation of concomitant therapy and periodically thereafter, particularly for diuretics and ACE inhibitors due to the increased risk of nephrotoxicity. (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Ciclosporin and tacrolimus: Diclofenac, like other NSAIDs may increase the nephrotoxicity of ciclosporin and tacrolimus due to the effect on renal prostaglandins. Therefore, it should be given at doses lower than those that would be used in patients not receiving ciclosporin or tacrolimus.

Drugs known to cause hyperkalemia: Concomitant treatment with potassium-sparing diuretics, ciclosporin, tacrolimus or trimethoprim may be associated with increased serum potassium levels, which should therefore be monitored frequently (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Quinolone antibacterials: There have been isolated reports of convulsions which may have been due to concomitant use of quinolones and NSAIDs.

Anticipated interactions to be considered

Other NSAIDs and corticosteroids: Concomitant administration of diclofenac and other systemic NSAIDs or corticosteroids may increase the frequency of gastrointestinal undesirable effects (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Anticoagulants and anti-platelet agents: Caution is recommended since concomitant administration could increase the risk of bleeding (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS). Although clinical investigations do not appear to indicate that diclofenac affects the action of anticoagulants, there are reports of an increased risk of hemorrhage in patients receiving diclofenac and anticoagulants concomitantly. Close monitoring of such patients is therefore recommended.

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs): Concomitant administration of systemic NSAIDs, including diclofenac, and SSRIs may increase the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding (see section WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).

Antidiabetics: Clinical studies have shown that diclofenac can be given together with oral antidiabetic agents without influencing their clinical effect. However, there have been isolated reports of both hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic effects necessitating changes in the dosage of the antidiabetic agents during treatment with diclofenac. For this reason, monitoring of the blood glucose level is recommended as a precautionary measure during concomitant therapy.

There have also been isolated reports of metabolic acidosis when diclofenac was co-administered with metformin, especially in patients with pre-existing renal impairment.

Phenytoin: When using phenytoin concomitantly with diclofenac, monitoring of phenytoin plasma concentrations is recommended due to an expected increase in exposure to phenytoin.

Methotrexate: Caution is recommended when NSAIDs, including diclofenac are administered less than 24 hours before or after treatment with methotrexate, since blood concentrations of methotrexate may rise and the toxicity of this substance be increased.

CYP2C9 inducers: Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inducers (such as rifampicin), which could result in a significant decrease in plasma concentration and exposure to diclofenac.

WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING POTENTIAL, PREGNANCY, BREAST-FEEDING AND FERTILITY

Women of child-bearing potential

There are no data to suggest any recommendations for women of child-bearing potential.

Pregnancy

There are insufficient data on the use of diclofenac in pregnant women. Some epidemiological studies suggest an increased risk of miscarriage after use of a prostaglandin synthesis inhibitor (such as NSAIDs) in early pregnancy, however the overall data are inconclusive. Do not use during the first two trimesters of pregnancy unless the expected benefits to the mother outweigh the risks to the fetus. As with other NSAIDs, use of diclofenac during the third trimester of pregnancy is contraindicated owing to the possibility of uterine inertia, fetal renal impairment with subsequent oligohydramnios and/or premature closure of the ductus arteriosus (see sections CONTRAINDICATIONS and NON-CLINICAL SAFETY DATA).

Breast-feeding

Like other NSAIDs, diclofenac passes into the breast milk in small amounts. Therefore, diclofenac should not be administered during breast feeding in order to avoid undesirable effect in the infant.

Fertility

As with other NSAIDs, the use of diclofenac may impair female fertility and is not recommended in women attempting to conceive. In women who have difficulties conceiving or who are undergoing investigation of infertility, withdrawal of treatment should be considered.

OVERDOSAGE

Symptoms

There is no typical clinical picture resulting from diclofenac overdose. Overdose can cause symptoms such as vomiting, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, diarrhea, dizziness, tinnitus or convulsions. In the event of significant poisoning, acute renal failure and liver damage are possible.

Therapeutic measures

Management of acute poisoning with NSAIDs, including diclofenac, essentially consists of supportive measures and symptomatic treatment. Supportive measures and symptomatic treatment should be given for complications such as hypotension, renal failure, convulsions, gastrointestinal disorder, and respiratory depression.

Special measures such as forced diuresis, dialysis or hemoperfusion are probably of no help in eliminating NSAIDs, including diclofenac, due to the high protein binding and extensive metabolism.

CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY

Mechanism of action (MOA)

Diclofenac sodium is a non-steroidal compound with pronounced antirheumatic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antipyretic properties. Inhibition of prostaglandin biosynthesis, which has been demonstrated in experiments, is considered to be fundamental to its mechanism of action. Prostaglandins play an important role in causing inflammation, pain and fever.

Diclofenac sodium *in vitro* does not suppress proteoglycan biosynthesis in cartilage at concentrations equivalent to the concentrations reached in humans.

Pharmacodynamics (PD)

In rheumatic diseases, the anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties of diclofenac elicit a clinical response characterized by marked relief from signs and symptoms such as pain at rest, pain on movement, morning stiffness, and swelling of the joints, as well as by an improvement in function.

In post-traumatic and post-operative inflammatory conditions, diclofenac rapidly relieves both spontaneous pain and pain on movement and reduces inflammatory swelling and wound edema.

Diclofenac has also been found to exert a pronounced analgesic effect in moderate and severe pain of non-rheumatic origin, an effect which sets in within 15 to 30 minutes.

Diclofenac has also been shown to have a beneficial effect in migraine attacks.

When used concomitantly with opioids for the management of post-operative pain, diclofenac significantly reduces the need for opioids.

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) ampoules are particularly suitable for initial treatment of inflammatory and degenerative rheumatic diseases, and of painful conditions due to inflammation of non-rheumatic origin.

Pharmacokinetics (PK)

Absorption

After administration of 75 mg diclofenac by intramuscular injection, absorption sets in immediately, and mean peak plasma concentrations of about 2.5 micrograms/mL (8 micromol/L) are reached after about 20 minutes.

When 75 mg diclofenac is administered as an intravenous infusion over 2 hours, mean peak plasma concentrations are about 1.9 micrograms/mL (5.9 micromol/L). Shorter infusions result in higher peak plasma concentrations, while longer infusions give plateau concentrations proportional to the infusion rate after 3 to 4 hours. In contrast, plasma concentrations decline rapidly once peak levels have been reached following intramuscular injection or administration of gastro-resistant tablets or suppositories.

The area under the concentration curve (AUC) after intramuscular or intravenous administration is about twice as large as it is following oral or rectal administration, because about half the active substance is metabolized during its first passage through the liver ("first pass" effect) when administered via the oral or rectal routes.

Pharmacokinetic behaviour does not change after repeated administration. No accumulation occurs provided the recommended dosage intervals are observed.

Distribution

99.7% of diclofenac binds to serum proteins, mainly to albumin (99.4%). The apparent volume of distribution calculated is 0.12 to 0.17 L/kg.

Diclofenac enters the synovial fluid, where maximum concentrations are measured 2 to 4 hours after peak plasma values have been reached. The apparent half-life for elimination from the synovial fluid is 3 to 6 hours. Two hours after reaching peak plasma levels, concentrations of the active substance are already higher in the synovial fluid than in the plasma, and they remain higher for up to 12 hours.

Diclofenac was detected in a low concentration (100 ng/mL) in breast milk in one nursing mother. The estimated amount ingested by an infant consuming breast milk is equivalent to a 0.03 mg/kg/day dose.

Biotransformation/metabolism

Biotransformation of diclofenac takes place partly by glucuronidation of the intact molecule, but mainly by single and multiple hydroxylation and methoxylation, resulting in several phenolic metabolites (3'-hydroxy-, 4'-hydroxy-, 5-hydroxy-, 4',5-dihydroxy-, and 3'-hydroxy-4'-methoxy-diclofenac), most of which are converted to glucuronide conjugates. Two of these phenolic metabolites are biologically active, but to a much lesser extent than diclofenac.

Elimination

Total systemic clearance of diclofenac from plasma is 263 ± 56 mL/min (mean value \pm SD). The terminal half-life in plasma is 1 to 2 hours. Four of the metabolites, including the two active ones, also have short plasma half-lives of 1 to 3 hours. One metabolite, 3'-hydroxy-4'-methoxy-diclofenac, has a much longer plasma half-life. However, this metabolite is virtually inactive.

About 60% of the administered dose is excreted in the urine as the glucuronide conjugate of the intact molecule and as metabolites, most of which are also converted to glucuronide conjugates. Less than 1% is excreted as unchanged substance. The rest of the dose is eliminated as metabolites through the bile in the faeces.

Linearity/non-linearity

The amount absorbed is in linear proportion to the size of the dose.

Special populations

Geriatric patients: No relevant age-dependent differences in the drug's absorption, metabolism, or excretion have been observed. However, in a few elderly patients a 15-minute intravenous infusion resulted in 50% higher plasma concentrations than expected from the data on young healthy subjects.

Renal impairment: In patients suffering from renal impairment, no accumulation of the unchanged active substance can be inferred from the single-dose kinetics when applying the usual dosage schedule. At a creatinine clearance of less than 10 mL/min, the calculated steady-state plasma levels of the hydroxy metabolites are about 4 times higher than in normal subjects.

However, the metabolites are ultimately cleared through the bile.

Hepatic impairment: In patients with chronic hepatitis or non-decompensated cirrhosis, the kinetics and metabolism of diclofenac are the same as in patients without liver disease.

CLINICAL STUDIES

Diclofenac (Voltaren®) is a well-established product.

NON-CLINICAL SAFETY DATA

Preclinical data from acute and repeated dose toxicity studies, as well as from genotoxicity, mutagenicity, and carcinogenicity studies with diclofenac revealed no specific hazard for humans at the intended therapeutic doses. In standard preclinical animal studies, there was no evidence that diclofenac had a teratogenic potential in mice, rats or rabbits.

Diclofenac had no influence on the fertility of parent animals in rats. Except for minimal fetal effects at maternally toxic doses, the prenatal, perinatal and postnatal development of the offspring was not affected.

Administration of NSAIDs (including diclofenac) inhibited ovulation in the rabbit and implantation and placentation in the rat, and led to premature closure of the ductus arteriosus in the pregnant rat. Maternally toxic doses of diclofenac were associated with dystocia, prolonged gestation, decreased fetal survival, and intrauterine growth retardation in rats. The slight effects of diclofenac on reproduction parameters and delivery as well as constriction of the ductus arteriosus in utero are pharmacologic consequences of this class of prostaglandin synthesis inhibitors (see sections CONTRAINDICATIONS and WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING POTENTIAL, PREGNANCY, BREAST-FEEDING AND FERTILITY).

INCOMPATIBILITIES

As a rule, Diclofenac (Voltaren®) solution for injection should not be mixed with other injection solutions.

Infusion solutions of sodium chloride 0.9% or glucose 5% without sodium bicarbonate as an additive present a risk of supersaturation, possibly leading to formation of crystals or precipitates. Infusion solutions other than those recommended should not be used.

STORAGE

Store at temperatures not exceeding 30°C.

Store in the original package in order to protect from light.

Do not use after the date marked "EXP" on the pack.

Drugs must be kept out of the reach and sight of children.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND HANDLING

The following directions for intramuscular injection must be followed in order to avoid damage to a nerve or other tissue at the injection site.

To be injected either intramuscularly by deep intragluteal injection into the upper outer quadrant using aseptic technique, or intravenously by slow infusion after dilution in accordance with the following instructions. Each ampoule is for single use only. The solution should be used immediately after opening. Any unused contents should be discarded.

Appropriate injection technique and length of needle (considering the thickness of the patient's gluteal fat) should be used to avoid inadvertent subcutaneous administration of Voltaren injection.

Depending on the intended duration of infusion (see section DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION), mix 100 to 500 mL of isotonic saline (sodium chloride 0.9% solution) or glucose 5% solution with the contents of one ampoule. Both solutions should be buffered with sodium bicarbonate injectable solution (0.5 mL of 8.4% or 1 mL of 4.2% or a corresponding volume of a different concentration) taken from a freshly opened container. Only clear solutions should be used. If crystals or precipitates are observed, the infusion solution should not be used.

AVAILABILITY

Box of 10 clear glass ampoules

Caution: Foods, Drugs, Devices and Cosmetics Act prohibits dispensing without prescription.

For suspected adverse drug reaction, report to the FDA: www.fda.gov.ph
The patient is advised to seek IMMEDIATE medical attention at the first sign of adverse drug reaction.

Registration No: DR-X1740

Date of First Authorization: 24 March 1976

Manufactured by:

Lek Pharmaceuticals d.d.

Verovskova 57 1526 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Imported by:

Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Inc.

5th and 6th Floors Ayala North Exchange Building, Tower 1

Ayala Avenue corner Salcedo & Amorsolo Sts.

Brgy. San Lorenzo, Makati, Metro Manila

Information issued: May 2020

® = registered trademark

Novartis Pharma AG, Basel, Switzerland