VA National Formulary Listing: Procainamide Extended-Release (ER)

VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management Strategic Healthcare Group and Medical Advisory Panel

Due to reported safety concerns with multiple formulations of procainamide being available (e.g., procainamide immediate–release prescribed q 6 hours instead of q 3 hours, the q 6 hour formulation of procainamide ER prescribed q 12 hour assuming Procanbid® was available, or prescribing Procanbid®, which is the q 12 hour formulation of procainamide ER, q 6 hours). In an effort to promote patient safety and minimize confusion, a specific formulation of procainamide ER (q 12 hours) has been listed on the VA National Formulary (VANF). This formulation should also be more convenient for patients. As noted above, procainamide ER q 12 hours is available as the brand name product Procanbid®.

It is not mandatory that patients be switched from their current procainamide regimen to the product listed on the VANF; however, it is encouraged that this decision be discussed at the VISN and/or local levels so that a clear plan is outlined for patients on procainamide to help minimize potential prescribing errors.

If it is decided that patients should be switched from their current procainamide regimen (e.g., procainamide ER, q 6 hours or procainamide immediate release formulations, q 3 hours) to the procainamide ER, q 12 hour formulation, the manufacturer states that the current dose can provide guidance in determining the dose of procainamide ER q 12 hours (see calculation below), however re-titration* with procainamide ER q 12 hours is recommended.

Current total daily dose of procainamide ÷ 2 =
Dose of procainamide ER (Procanbid®) to be administered q 12 hours

Examples:

- If the patient is taking procainamide ER 250mg q 6 hours, the dose of procainamide ER (Procanbid®) should be 500mg q 12 hours

- If the patient is taking procainamide immediate release 250mg q3 hours, the dose of procainamide ER (Procanbid®) should be 1000mg q 12 hours

*The manufacturer provides the following guidance for the initial dose based on the patient's weight (up to 50mg/kg per day). The dose should be individually adjusted in patients with renal, hepatic or cardiac insufficiency, and based upon the patient's age (a lower dose or longer dosing interval may be required). The dose may need to be adjusted based on blood levels and clinical response.

Patient's Weight	Dose
88-110 1b (40-50 kg)	1000mg q 12 hours
132-154 lb (60-70 kg)	1500mg q 12 hours
176-198 lb (80-90 kg)	2000 mg q 12 hours
> 220 lb (> 100 kg)	2500 mg q12 hours

Procainamide ER (Procanbid®) q 12 hours is available in 500mg (blue) and 1000mg (gray) film-coated tablets. The tablets should be swallowed whole and not crushed, chewed, or cut. The patient should be informed that after the drug is released from the tablet, the tablet may be found in the stool. The manufacturer's product information should be consulted for additional prescribing information if needed.