Benefits and Risks of Fosaprepitant in Patients Receiving Emetogenic Regimens

Wendy Pritchett, MSN, RN, OCN®, and Karen Kinsley, BSN, RN, OCN®

Fosaprepitant dimeglumine (Emend IV®) is an IV antiemetic that may be beneficial to patients receiving highly emetogenic regimens. Aprepitant (Emend®) is an oral medication that is administered for three consecutive days, whereas fosaprepitant is a single-dose IV medication that is administered on the day of chemotherapy for 20–30 minutes (depending on the IV access type). Fosaprepitant may be useful, yet it can also present a risk for hypersensitivity reactions and phlebitis. Oncology nurses must be aware of the signs and symptoms of these potential adverse events to properly care for their patients.

At a Glance
• When used before emetogenic chemotherapy regimens, fosaprepitant dimeglumine (Emend IV®) may help to prevent acute and delayed nausea and vomiting.
• Infusion site adverse events related to fosaprepitant may include phlebitis, erythema, pain, swelling, and local reaction.
• Hypersensitivity reactions with the use of fosaprepitant are rare.

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Infusion Site Adverse Events and Phlebitis

Infusion site adverse events such as phlebitis occur when the drug leaks outside of the vein during administration. Related adverse events with fosaprepitant include erythema, induration, pain, swelling, thrombophlebitis, pruritus, vein discoloration, extravasation, and local reaction at the infusion site (Lundberg, Crawford, Phillips, Berger, & Wesolowski, 2014). Infusion site adverse events are graded from 1–5 (see Table 1). Phlebitis can be defined as an inflammation of the vein, which can be mechanical, chemical, or bacterial in origin (Ray-Barruel, Polit, Murfield, & Rickard, 2014). Some of the symptoms of phlebitis are erythema, itching, pain, hardening of the vein, thrombophlebitis, and vein discoloration. Increased occurrence of phlebitis is noted...