

Deferoxamine, also known by its trade name Desferal, is a medication used for the treatment of iron overload. Iron overload can occur in conditions such as thalassemia, hemochromatosis, and transfusion-dependent anemias, where excessive iron accumulates in the body due to increased iron absorption or frequent blood transfusions.

Here are some key points about deferoxamine:

Mechanism of action: Deferoxamine is a chelating agent, which means it binds to excess iron in the body and forms a stable complex that can be excreted through urine or feces. It binds primarily to ferric iron (Fe^{3+}), removing it from tissues and preventing its toxic effects.

Administration: Deferoxamine is available as an injectable medication and is usually administered through subcutaneous (under the skin) or intravenous (into a vein) routes. The dose and frequency of administration depend on the severity of iron overload and the specific condition being treated.

Indications: Deferoxamine is primarily used for the treatment of chronic iron overload in conditions such as thalassemia major, transfusion-dependent anemias, and certain forms of hemochromatosis. It is not effective for the treatment of acute iron poisoning.

Side effects: Common side effects of deferoxamine may include local skin reactions at the injection site, such as redness, swelling, or pain. Systemic side effects, although less common, can include allergic reactions, visual and auditory disturbances, and rare cases of lung or kidney toxicity. Close monitoring of kidney function and regular ophthalmologic assessments are often recommended during treatment.

Combination therapy: In some cases, deferoxamine may be used in combination with other medications or chelating agents to enhance iron removal. Combination therapy may be necessary for individuals with severe iron overload or those who do not adequately respond to deferoxamine alone.

It's important to note that the use of deferoxamine should be under the supervision of a healthcare professional experienced in the treatment of iron overload. The dosage, duration, and specific treatment plan may vary depending on individual patient factors and the underlying condition.

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Last update: **2024/06/07 02:51**

