Treatment with Aminoglycoside (Amikacin, Gentamicin, Tobramycin) antibiotics.

You have been given this leaflet because your doctor would like you to take an aminoglycoside antibiotic as they believe it is the best antibiotic to use for your infection.

What is an aminoglycoside?
Aminoglycosides are a group of antibiotics used for treating or preventing serious bacterial infections. An aminoglycoside might be the best type of antibiotic for the bacteria causing your infection or your doctor might have decided to use one of these drugs because it is not possible to use others (for example, if you are allergic to other antibiotics).

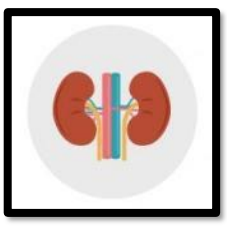
How will I be given aminoglycosides?
Aminoglycoside antibiotics are given into a vein usually in hospital. The dose depends on whether an aminoglycoside is treating or preventing an infection, what the infection is, your age, body weight, height and how well your kidneys are working. Aminoglycosides are usually given once a day but for less than a week, except in certain cases, such as heart infections.

How can aminoglycosides affect my ears?
All medicines can cause adverse effects/side effects. While very effective, aminoglycosides can very rarely cause ear damage (hearing/balance issues) especially with prolonged use. You might have a ringing noise in your ears (tinnitus) or not be able to hear as well as usual. Please tell the doctor or nurse caring for you immediately if you experience any of these symptoms, so the potential risks to your hearing can be minimised.



You are at higher risk of ear damage if you are aged over 65 or if your kidneys are not working well. Other medication can also increase your risks of hearing damage so it is hard for us to know exactly how likely ear damage is for individual patients.

How can aminoglycosides affect my kidneys?
Another side effect of aminoglycoside treatment can be damage to your kidneys. If this happens, your kidneys may not be able to get rid of waste products as well as usual. You might feel nauseous, have itchy skin or notice swelling round your ankles. These effects can usually be reversed. Doses of other medicines you take can also be adjusted to reduce the risk of kidney damage.



What can be done to reduce the risk?
Your healthcare professional will discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with you. There may be alternative antibiotics to manage your infection, but this is not always possible, particularly with serious infections.

If you are prescribed an aminoglycoside, the amount in your blood will be measured with blood tests every few days to check it is not accumulating. Your doctor will also check your kidney function before starting an aminoglycoside. If your treatment with an aminoglycoside is for more than 7 days, you might be asked to take a hearing test.

If you are taking water tablets (diuretics), like furosemide or painkillers like ibuprofen, we may ask you to temporarily stop them while you are having an aminoglycoside as they can increase the risk of ear and/or kidney damage. If they have to be continued, we will monitor you carefully.

Is there anything I can do to help?
As other medicines can affect the action of aminoglycosides, it is really important to tell us about all the medicines you use, including ones you buy for yourself which are not prescribed and any herbal medicines or supplements.

You should also tell us if you have any allergies, if you have had problems with your hearing or kidneys in the past or if you have a condition called myasthenia gravis.

If you experience any problems such as difficulty keeping your balance, dizziness, ringing in your ears or hearing loss, it is really important that you tell your healthcare professional immediately.

Who can I speak to if I have any questions?
This leaflet is specific to the ear and kidney damage side effects of aminoglycosides. If you would like information on other side-effects, the product manufacturers' leaflet is available in each box of an aminoglycoside. If you wish, the nursing staff can provide this and is also available here: www.medicines.org.uk

If you have further questions, speak to the doctor, pharmacist or nurse caring for you.