Yellow fever vaccine

Mosquitoes transmit yellow fever in some areas of the world

GENERIC AND PROPRIETARY NAMES
- Yellow fever vaccine.

ACTION
- The vaccine is a live, attenuated preparation that provokes an immune response providing protection from yellow fever.

CLASSIFICATION
- Vaccines and antisera.

INDICATIONS
- Laboratory workers handling infected material.
- Travellers to countries requiring an international certificate of vaccination for entry.
- Travellers to or living in infected areas or countries in the yellow fever-endemic zone.

CONTRAINDICATIONS
- Age less than nine months.
- Chemotherapy or radiotherapy.
- Immunosuppressive treatment.
- Bone marrow transplant in the previous six months.
- Long-term steroid medication.
- HIV infection.
- Fever (postpone vaccination).
- Severe allergy to egg, which is used in the vaccine production.

CAUTIONS
- Pregnancy – the risk is theoretical. Therefore if it is impossible to avoid the yellow fever area, then the risk from the vaccine may be considered to be less than the risk from yellow fever.

COMMON SIDE-EFFECTS
- Mild headache.
- Muscle aches.
- Mild fever.
- Soreness at the injection site.

RARE SIDE-EFFECTS
- Severe reactions are rare.

ADMINISTRATION
- The yellow fever vaccination is available as a lyophilised powder for reconstitution with a diluent by gently swirling the contents to dissolve the vaccine.
- It is administered by subcutaneous injection.
- The vaccine must be used within one hour of reconstitution.
- Yellow fever vaccine can be given at the same time as another live vaccine, the two vaccines should be given at an interval of at least three weeks.
- The site of each vaccination should be recorded in the patient’s records along with details of batch number and expiry date.

PATIENT TEACHING
- Advise patients to have the vaccine at least 10 days before the date of travel to allow immunity to develop.
- Yellow fever vaccine can only be given at accredited centres. Many GP surgeries are accredited. A full list of accredited centres is on the www.nathnac.org website.
- Before undertaking the procedure, ensure patients are made fully aware of charges made for administering the vaccine and/or issuing the certificate.

REFERENCES

Nurses should refer to manufacturer’s summary of product characteristics and to appropriate local guidelines.