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Dear Colleague:

I am writing to let you know that the Prescribing Information for INVANZ[®] (ertapenem sodium) has new information on post-marketing adverse reactions, specifically *Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Disorders: Drug Rash with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms (DRESS syndrome)*.

Please refer to safety information in the adverse reactions section of the enclosed package insert. The updated product information may also be accessed from the following link:
http://www.invanz.com/ertapenem_sodium/invanz/hcp/product_information/pi/index.jsp

We felt it important to provide you with the most current information in the event you receive questions from your members.

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

Treatment

INVANZ is indicated for the treatment of patients with the following moderate to severe infections caused by susceptible isolates of the designated microorganisms.

Complicated Intra-abdominal Infections due to *Escherichia coli*, *Clostridium clostridioforme*, *Eubacterium lentum*, *Peptostreptococcus* species, *Bacteroides fragilis*, *Bacteroides distasonis*, *Bacteroides ovatus*, *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron*, or *Bacteroides uniformis*.

Complicated skin/skin structure infections, including diabetic foot infections without osteomyelitis, due to *Staphylococcus aureus* (methicillin-susceptible isolates only), *Streptococcus agalactiae*, *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *E coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Proteus mirabilis*, *B fragilis*, *Peptostreptococcus* species, *Porphyromonas asaccharolytica*, or *Prevotella bivia*. INVANZ has not been studied in diabetic foot infections with concomitant osteomyelitis.

Community-acquired pneumonia due to *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (penicillin-susceptible isolates only), including cases with concurrent bacteremia, *Haemophilus influenzae* (beta-lactamase–negative isolates only), or *Moraxella catarrhalis*.

Complicated urinary tract infections, including pyelonephritis, due to *E coli*, including cases with concurrent bacteremia, or *K pneumoniae*.

Acute pelvic infections, including postpartum endomyometritis, septic abortion, and postsurgical gynecologic infections, due to *S agalactiae*, *E coli*, *B fragilis*, *P asaccharolytica*, *Peptostreptococcus* species, or *P bivia*.

Prevention

INVANZ is indicated in adults for the **prophylaxis of surgical site infection following elective colorectal surgery**.

Appropriate specimens for bacteriological examination should be obtained in order to isolate and identify the causative organisms and to determine their susceptibility to INVANZ. Therapy with INVANZ may be initiated empirically before results of these tests are known; once results become available, antimicrobial therapy should be adjusted accordingly.

To reduce the development of drug-resistant bacteria and maintain the effectiveness of INVANZ and other antibacterial drugs, INVANZ should be used only to treat or prevent infections that are proven or strongly suspected to be caused by susceptible bacteria. When culture and susceptibility information are available, they should be considered in selecting or modifying antibacterial therapy. In the absence of such data, local epidemiology and susceptibility patterns may contribute to the empiric selection of therapy.

SELECTED IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

INVANZ is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to any component of this product or to other drugs in the same class or in patients who have demonstrated anaphylactic reactions to beta-lactams.

Due to the use of lidocaine HCl as a diluent, INVANZ administered intramuscularly is contraindicated in patients with a known hypersensitivity to local anesthetics of the amide type. (Refer to the prescribing information for lidocaine HCl.)

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SELECTED IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (*cont*)

SERIOUS AND OCCASIONALLY FATAL HYPERSENSITIVITY (ANAPHYLACTIC) REACTIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN PATIENTS RECEIVING THERAPY WITH BETA-LACTAMS. **SERIOUS ANAPHYLACTIC REACTIONS REQUIRE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY TREATMENT WITH EPINEPHRINE, OXYGEN, INTRAVENOUS STEROIDS, AND AIRWAY MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING INTUBATION.**

Seizures and other central nervous system (CNS) adverse experiences have been reported during treatment with INVANZ® (ertapenem sodium).

Co-administration of carbapenems, including INVANZ, to patients receiving valproic acid or divalproex sodium results in a reduction of valproic acid concentrations, which may drop below the therapeutic range and increase the risk of breakthrough seizures. Increasing the dose of valproic acid or divalproex sodium may not be sufficient. Concomitant use of INVANZ and valproic acid/divalproex sodium is generally not recommended. Consider other anti-bacterials in patients whose seizures are well controlled on valproic acid or divalproex sodium. If INVANZ is necessary, consider supplemental anticonvulsant therapy.

Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhea (CDAD) has been reported with use of nearly all antibacterial agents, including INVANZ, and may range in severity from mild diarrhea to fatal colitis. CDAD must be considered in all patients who present with diarrhea following antibiotic use. CDAD has been reported to occur over 2 months after administration of antibacterial agents. If CDAD is suspected or confirmed, ongoing antibiotic use not directed against *C difficile* may need to be discontinued.

As with other antibiotics, prolonged use of INVANZ may result in overgrowth of nonsusceptible organisms. Repeated evaluation of the patient's condition is essential. If superinfection occurs during therapy, appropriate measures should be taken.

Prescribing INVANZ in the absence of a proven or strongly suspected bacterial infection or a prophylactic indication is unlikely to provide benefit to the patient and increases the risk of the development of drug-resistant bacteria.

During clinical trials, the most common drug-related adverse experiences in adult patients treated with INVANZ, including those who were switched to therapy with an oral antimicrobial, were diarrhea (5.5%), infused vein complication (3.7%), nausea (3.1%), headache (2.2%), vaginitis in females (2.1%), phlebitis/thrombophlebitis (1.3%), and vomiting (1.1%).

Before prescribing INVANZ, please read the accompanying Prescribing Information.

Visit www.invanz.com for more information. You can also contact us about Merck products and services at the National Service Center at 1-800-444-2080.

Sincerely,



Julie M. Gerhart, RPh, M.S.
Manager, Pharmacy Affairs

Enclosure: Prescribing Information for INVANZ

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