

## SUMMARY OF PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS (SMPC)

### 1. NAME OF MEDICAL PRODUCT

ARTEBEN- Albendazole Suspension

### 2. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE COMPOSITION

Each 5 ml contains :

Albendazole BP ..... 200 mg

### 3. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM

Suspension

### 4. CLINICAL PARTICULARS

#### 4.1 Therapeutic indications

**Albendazole Suspension** is indicated in the treatment of single or mixed infestations of intestinal and tissue parasites, in adults and children over 2 years of age. Clinical studies have shown to be effective in the treatment of infections caused by: *Enterobius vermicularis* (pinworm/threadworm), *Ascaris lumbricoides* (roundworm), *Ancylostoma duodenale* and *Necator americanus* (hookworms), *Trichuris trichiura* (whipworm), *Strongyloides stercoralis*, animal hookworm larvae causing cutaneous larva migrans, and the liver flukes *Opisthorchis viverrini* and *Clonorchis sinensis*. Albendazole Suspension is also indicated for the treatment of *Hymenolepis nana* and *Taenia* spp. (tapeworm) infections, when other susceptible helminths species are present. Treatment courses should be extended to 3 days

#### 4.2 Posology and method of administration

Albendazole Suspension Adults and Children (over two years):

- *Enterobius vermicularis*, *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Ancylostoma duodenale*, *Necator americanus* and *Trichuris trichiura*: Alben-G 400mg as a single dose, taken on an empty stomach.
- Suspected or confirmed *Strongyloides stercoralis* infestation: Albendazole Suspension once daily, taken on an empty stomach for three consecutive days. Patients should then be appropriately followed for at least 2 weeks to confirm cure.
- Cutaneous larva migrans: Albendazole Suspension once daily, taken with food for one to three days has been reported to be effective.
- Suspected or confirmed *Taenia* spp. or *Hymenolepis nana* infestation, when other susceptible helminths species are present: Albendazole Suspension once daily, taken on

an empty stomach for three consecutive days. If the patient is not cured after three weeks, a second course of Albendazole Suspension treatment is indicated.

- In cases of proven *H. nana* infestation, retreatment in 10-21 days is recommended.(see WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS)
- Mixed worm infestations including *Opisthorchis viverrini* and *Clonorchis sinensis*: Albendazole Suspension twice a day, taken with food for three days is effective. Patients should be re-examined 1 month after treatment to confirm fluke eradication.

**Route of administration;** Oral

#### **4.3 Contraindications**

Albendazole Suspension should not be administered during pregnancy or in women thought to be pregnant. Albendazole has been shown to be teratogenic and embryotoxic in rats and rabbits. Women of childbearing age should be advised to take effective precautions against conception during and within one month of completion of treatment with Albendazole Suspension. Albendazole is contraindicated in persons who are known to be hypersensitive to albendazole, other benzimidazole derivatives, or any component of the tablets.

#### **4.4 Special warnings and precautions.**

Use in Systemic Helminth Infections (longer duration of treatment at higher doses) Mild to moderate elevations of liver enzymes have been reported with albendazole.

In prolonged higher dose albendazole therapy for hydatid disease there have been rare reports of severe hepatic abnormalities associated with jaundice and histological hepatocellular damage, which may be irreversible. Enzyme abnormalities usually normalise on discontinuation of treatment. Patients with abnormal liver function test results (transaminases) prior to commencing albendazole therapy should be carefully evaluated and therapy should be discontinued if liver enzymes are significantly increased (greater than twice the upper limit of normal) or full blood count decreased by a clinically significant level (see Adverse Reactions). Albendazole treatment may be restarted when liver enzymes have returned to normal limits, but patients should be carefully monitored for a recurrence. Case reports of hepatitis have also been received (see Adverse Reactions). Liver function tests should be obtained before the start of each treatment cycle and at least every two

weeks during treatment. Albendazole has been shown to cause bone marrow suppression and therefore blood counts should be performed at the start and every two weeks during each 28 day cycle. Patients with liver disease, including hepatic echinococcosis, appear to be more susceptible to bone marrow suppression leading to pancytopenia, aplastic anaemia, agranulocytosis and leukopenia and therefore warrant closer monitoring of blood counts. Albendazole should be discontinued if clinically significant decreases in blood cell counts occur. Symptoms associated with an inflammatory reaction following death of the parasite may occur in patients receiving albendazole treatment for neurocysticercosis (e.g. seizures, raised intracranial pressure, focal signs). These should be treated with appropriate steroid and anticonvulsant therapy. Oral or intravenous corticosteroids are recommended to prevent cerebral hypertensive episodes during the first week of treatment. Pre-existing neurocysticercosis may also be uncovered in patients treated with albendazole for other conditions, particularly in areas with high taeniosis infection. Patients may experience neurological symptoms e.g. seizures, increased intracranial pressure and focal signs because of an inflammatory reaction caused by death of the parasite within the brain. Symptoms may occur soon after treatment, appropriate steroid and anticonvulsant therapy should be started immediately. There is a risk that treatment of *Taenia Solium* infections may be complicated by cysticercosis, and appropriate measures should be taken to minimize this possibility. Confirmation of eradication of many intestinal and tissue parasites is necessary after treatment. (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION)

**Use in Impaired Renal or Hepatic Function** The use of Albendazole Suspension in patients with impaired renal or hepatic function has not been studied. However, caution should be used in patients with pre-existing liver disease, since Albendazole is metabolized by the liver and has been associated with idiosyncratic hepatotoxicity.

**Use In Children** There is limited experience with Albendazole in children under 2 years of age, therefore use in this age group is not recommended.

**Carcinogenicity and Mutagenicity** No evidence of carcinogenic activity was observed in mice given albendazole in the diet at doses up to 400mg/kg/day for 25 months. In rats, dietary administration of doses of 3.5, 7 and 20mg/kg/day did not affect the total incidence of adrenocortical tumors (adenoma plus carcinoma), however, in females there was an increased incidence of adrenocortical carcinomas. Mutagenicity tests with bacterial cells and an assay of chromosomal damage in vivo have

shown no clear evidence that albendazole has genotoxic activity.

A cell transformation assay showed a slight dose-related increase in the transformation rate of cultured mouse cells in the presence of metabolic activation.

**4.5 Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interactions** Cimetidine, praziquantel and dexamethasone have been reported to increase the plasma levels of the albendazole active metabolite. Ritonavir, phenytoin, carbamazepine and phenobarbital may have the potential to reduce plasma concentrations of the active metabolite of albendazole; albendazole sulfoxide. The clinical relevance of this is unknown, but may result in decreased efficacy, especially in the treatment of systemic helminth infections. Patients should be monitored for efficacy and may require alternative dose regimens or therapies

**4.6 Fertility, pregnancy and lactation.**

Use in Pregnancy (Category D) See CONTRAINDICATIONS. Albendazole is contraindicated during pregnancy, and for one month prior to conception. In order to avoid administering albendazole during early pregnancy, women of child bearing age should initiate treatment during the first week of menstruation or after a negative pregnancy test. The use of Albendazole in human pregnancy has not been studied, but in animal studies it is teratogenic in more than one species. In animal studies oral treatment with maternotoxic doses of albendazole (30mg/kg/day) during the period of organogenesis was associated with multiple malformations in rats and ectrodactyly in rabbits. In one study in rats, an oral dose (10mg/kg/day) similar to the human therapeutic dose was not maternotoxic but was associated with microphthalmia and microfetalis. The latter occurred alone and together with multiple malformations including cranioschisis, talipes and renal agenesis. There is no information on the possible effect of albendazole on the human foetus.

Use in Lactation: Adequate human and animal data on use during lactation are not available. Therefore, breast feeding should be discontinued during and for a minimum of 5 days after treatment.

**4.7. Effects on Ability to Drive and Use Machines**

None known.

#### 4.8 Undesirable effects

**ADVERSE REACTIONS** The following adverse events were observed during clinical studies. It should however be noted that causality has not necessarily been established for these events.

**Common ( $\geq 1\%$ )** Abdominal pain was the most frequently reported symptom ( $1\%$ ) during short term dosing, however this frequency was not significantly different from that in placebo-treated patients.

**Uncommon ( $>0.1\%$  and  $<1\%$ )** Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, itchiness and/or skin rashes were reported. There was no significant difference in the percentage of patients experiencing diarrhea, compared to placebo treated patients. **Rare ( $< 0.1\%$ )** Rarely reported events included bone pain, proteinuria, and low red cell count. Leucopenia and transiently raised hepatic enzymes were reported in studies with laboratory monitoring, however no definite relationship to the drug was shown. Hypersensitivity reactions including rash, pruritis and urticaria have been reported very rarely. During prolonged higher dose albendazole therapy of hydatid disease there have also been reports of severe hepatic abnormalities, including jaundice and hepatocellular damage which may be irreversible.

**Post-Marketing Data** During post-marketing surveillance, the following reactions have been reported additionally in temporal association with Albendazole.

**Use in intestinal infections and Cutaneous larva migrans (short duration treatment at lower dose):** Headache has been reported uncommonly ( $\geq 0.1\%$  and  $<1\%$ ) in treatment with albendazole. Erythema multiforme and Stevens-Johnson syndrome have been reported very rarely ( $<0.01\%$ ).

**Use in systemic helminth infections (longer duration of treatment at higher doses):** Headache has been reported very commonly ( $\geq 10\%$ ). Reversible alopecia (thinning of hair, and moderate hair loss) and fever have been reported commonly ( $\geq 1\%$  and  $<10\%$ ). Hepatitis has been uncommonly associated with albendazole treatment. Blood disorders such as pancytopenia, aplastic anemia and agranulocytosis have been associated very rarely with albendazole treatment. Patients with liver disease, including hepatic echinococcosis, appear to be more susceptible to bone marrow suppression (see Precautions). There have been very rare cases of Erythema multiforme and Stevens Johnson syndrome.

#### **4.9. Overdose**

Significant toxicity and mortality were shown in animal studies at doses exceeding 5,000 mg/kg; in rats, at estimated doses between 1,300 and 2,400 mg/kg; in hamsters, at doses exceeding 10,000 mg/kg; and in rabbits, at estimated doses between 500 and 1,250 mg/kg. In the animals, symptoms were demonstrated in a dose-response relationship and included diarrhea, vomiting, tachycardia, and respiratory distress. In case of overdosage, symptomatic therapy and general supportive measures are recommended.

### **5. PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES**

#### **5.1. Pharmacodynamic Properties**

Albendazole is a broad-spectrum anthelmintic, which is highly effective against a wide range of intestinal helminths. Albendazole is also effective against tissue helminth infections, such as cutaneous larva migrans (see INDICATIONS). Albendazole therapy has also been used in the high dose, long term treatment of tissue helminth infections including hydatid cysts and cysticercosis. The anthelmintic action of albendazole is thought to be mainly intra-intestinal. However, at higher albendazole doses, sufficient is absorbed and metabolized to the active sulfoxide metabolite, to have a therapeutic effect against tissue parasites. Albendazole exhibits larvicidal, ovicidal and vermicial activity, and is thought to act via inhibition of tubulin polymerization. This causes a cascade of metabolic disruption, including energy depletion, which immobilizes and then kills the susceptible helminth.

#### **5.2. Pharmacokinetic Properties**

In man, the full extent of albendazole absorption following oral administration has not been established. However, it is known that albendazole is poorly absorbed with most of an oral dose remaining in the gastrointestinal tract. The poor absorption is believed to be due to the low aqueous solubility of albendazole. Absorption is significantly enhanced (approximately 5 fold) if albendazole is administered with a fatty meal. Albendazole rapidly undergoes extensive first-pass metabolism in the liver, and is generally not detected in plasma. Albendazole sulfoxide is the primary metabolite, which is thought to be the active moiety in effectiveness against systemic tissue infections. The plasma half-life of albendazole sulfoxide is 8½ hours. Albendazole sulfoxide and its metabolites appear to be principally eliminated in bile, with only a small proportion appearing in the urine.

### **5.3. Preclinical Safety Data**

No relevant data.

## **6. PHARMACEUTICAL PARTICULARS**

### **6.1. List of Excipients**

Polysorbate 80 BP, Xanthan Gum BP, Purified Water BP

### **6.2. Incompatibilities**

None reported

### **6.3 Shelf life**

36 months of date of manufacture

### **6.4. Special Precautions for Storage**

Store below 30 °C.

### **6.5. Nature and Contents of Container**

10 ml amber colored PET bottle packed in a unit printed duplexboard carton along with its package insert.

### **6.6 Special precautions for disposal**

Any unused product or waste material should be disposed of in accordance with local requirements.

## **7. MARKETING AUTHORISATION**

Artemis Laboratories Limited,  
Plot 4, Block 4, Ogun State Housing Corporation &  
Industrial Estate, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **MANUFACTURER**

Artemis Laboratories Limited,  
Plot 4, Block 4, Ogun State Housing Corporation &  
Industrial Estate, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.