

Vecuronium

What is Vecuronium?

Vecuronium is a medication that is a neuromuscular blocking agent. It causes skeletal muscle relaxation in infants requiring mechanical ventilation. It essentially ‘paralyzes’ the baby temporarily. It is not the paralysis that you may be thinking. This is not the permanent paralysis like if someone was in a bad car accident. This paralysis is medication caused---we can bring the baby ‘back around’ at any time.

Tell Me More About This Paralysis Stuff

Infants that are on Vecuronium are usually extremely sick. Frequently these babies are very agitated because they don’t want to be on a ventilator, they want to eat---these babies are usually fighting the ventilator and not allowing the machine to do the work. Many times these babies just get sicker and sicker. We can try certain forms of sedation, but Vecuronium is usually the drug of choice.

Your baby will not move when he is on the ventilator. His heart will still beat, he can still feel your touch, and he can still hear your voice. He will not open his eyes, he will not wrap his fingers around your finger, and he will not breathe by himself. We just want him to ‘settle down’ and let us do the work until he is better.

Once your baby is better, we will let him ‘wake up’ from the Vecuronium. He then will start slowly moving around again—opening his eyes and wrapping his fingers around yours.

How do you give Vecuronium?

Vecuronium is given by IV. It works almost instantaneously and lasts anywhere from 1-4 hours before the baby needs it again.

What is “light” Vecuronium?

With certain babies, the doctor might order the Vecuronium to be “light”. What this means is that we may allow the baby to open his/her eyes or maybe move his hand, but once the baby starts waking up too much or fighting the ventilator, we will give him the medication again.