Heparin Indications

Heparin is an anticoagulant medication, which is a cofactor for antithrombin, working to inactivate the coagulation factors IIa (Thrombin) and Xa. It is indicated for use in acute coronary syndrome, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary embolisms, and prophylaxis in hypercoagulable states. Heparin does not cross the placenta, posing no risk to the fetus, and is commonly used for anticoagulation in pregnant patients.



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Indications

Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS)
Acute-angle Heart
Acute coronary syndrome refers to symptoms induced by obstruction of coronary arteries. Etiologies of ACS include unstable angina, STEMI or NSTEMI. Heparin is indicated to help break clots (thrombolysis) in cases of non-ST elevation MI (NSTEMI).

Prophylaxis
Purple-axes
Heparin is used as a prophylactic agent against thrombosis or clots in cases where patients are immobile, hypercoagulable or susceptible to serious complications of thrombosis. Examples of this include patients with risk of or previous DVTs, patients undergoing surgery, and immobile patients.

Pulmonary Embolism
Lungs Elmo
Though thrombolysis is a goal of treatment in pulmonary embolism, another acute method of stabilizing patients is to keep the thrombi from getting bigger. Heparin is used to prevent expansion of these thrombi.

Atrial Fibrillation
Atria-heart Alarm-clock
In atrial fibrillation, patients are overwhelmed by disorganized electrical impulses, leading to an arrhythmia and an increased risk of hematologic stasis. Patients who are at an increased risk for stroke and embolism are often anticoagulated with heparin.

Used during Pregnancy
Pregnant-woman
Physiologically, pregnant patients may become hypercoagulable, as a physiologic mechanism to prevent post-partum hemorrhage. Heparin does not cross the placenta, and is safe in the developing fetus. Heparin is used as antithrombic treatment both before and during pregnancy, in patients who are hypercoagulable or need prophylaxis.

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