Echinocandins

Echinocandins are antifungal medications that work by inhibiting cell wall synthesis. They do this by inhibiting the synthesis of Beta-glucan. These drugs are used for treating invasive aspergillosis and candida. Side effects of echinocandin use are rare but can include GI upset and flushing due to histamine release.



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"-Fungin" Suffix
Funyuns
Echinocandins are recognizable because they share a "-fungin" suffix. Example medications include caspofungin and micafungin.

Indications

Invasive Aspergillosis
Invading Asparagus
Echinocandins are used empirically in patients with invasive aspergillosis. These medications can also be used in patients with refractory infections or who are intolerant of other medications, such as amphotericin B or itraconazole.

Candida
Canada
This drug class is approved for use against invasive candidiasis as well, with specific indications for intra-abdominal abscesses, peritonitis, pleural cavity infections, and esophagitis.

Mechanism

Inhibits Cell Wall Synthesis
Disrupted Cell Wall
This drug class makes fungi susceptible to destruction by inhibiting cell wall synthesis, thus decreasing fungal cell wall integrity.

Inhibits Synthesis of Beta-glucan
Inhibiting-chains on Beta-fish with Glue-can
This drug class inhibits the enzyme that makes Beta-glucan, which is an integral part of fungal cell walls.

Side Effects

GI Distress
GI-guy with Flare-gun
This drug class has a very low incidence of side effects, but patients have been known to complain of GI upset and distress.

Flushing
Flashlight
Patients can complain of flushing or hypersensitivity reactions, as echinocandins can promote histamine release.

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