Sucralfate (Carafate)

Sucralfate (Carafate) is an antiulcer agent used in patients with duodenal ulcers. This medication works by creating a barrier that protects existing ulcers from stomach acid and pepsin, allowing the ulcer(s) to heal. Patients should be instructed to take sucralfate on an empty stomach and at least two hours before or after a meal. An oral suspension may be recommended for patients with difficulty swallowing large pills.



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Mechanism

Creates Protective Barrier
Protective Barrier
This medication works by creating a barrier in the stomach that protects existing ulcers from stomach acid and pepsin, allowing the ulcer(s) to heal. The sticky, viscid barrier created by the medication adheres to the ulcer crater for up to 6 hours. The medication does NOT provide any acid neutralizing response or decrease acid secretion.

Indications

GI Ulcers
GI Ulcer-volcano
This medication is used for patients with GI ulcers, particularly duodenal ulcers. The protective barrier that is created in the stomach protects existing ulcers from further exposure to acid and other substances, such as pepsin allowing the ulcer(s) to heal.

Side Effects

Constipation
Corked Con-toilet
Though sucralfate has very few side effects; constipation may occur.

Considerations

Require Acidic Environment
Using Acidic-lemon
In order to form a protective barrier in the stomach, this medication must be in an acidic environment. For this reason, sucralfate should not be taken with antacids or other medications that alter the pH of the stomach.

Give on Empty Stomach
Giving to Empty Stomach
The medication works by forming a protective barrier in the stomach and should be given on an empty stomach to be effective.

Oral Suspension Available
Mouth Suspenders
The pill form of this medication is large and may be difficult to swallow, especially for elderly patients. Patients who may have difficulty swallowing this medication as a pill can be given an oral suspension preparation instead.

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May Decrease Absorption of Other Meds

Down-arrow Absorbing-sponge Med-bottles

Sucralfate should be given two hours before or after other medications, as it may decrease absorption of other medications, especially phenytoin, digoxin, warfarin, and fluoroquinolone antibiotics.

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