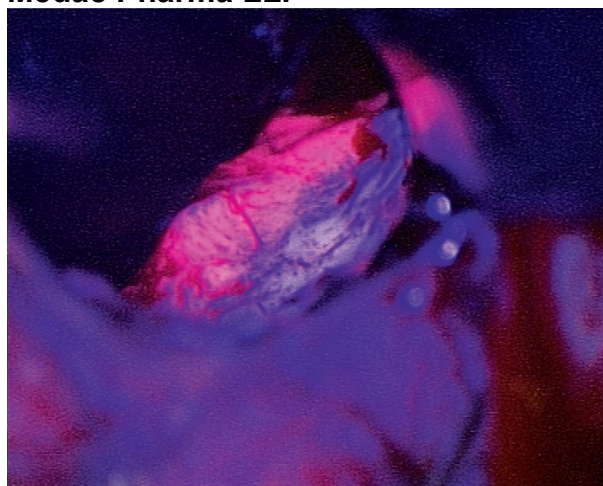


Gliolan® 5 – ALA (aminolevulinic acid hydrochloride)

What is Gliolan (5-ALA)?

Gliolan (also known as 5-ALA) is an oral medicine that can help specific brain tumours glow red under a specific light, a bit like a dye. Normally these brain tumours can look very similar to normal tissue and so it can be difficult to discern between normal and abnormal brain tissue. Your neurosurgeon will review your scan and decide whether it is appropriate for you to be administered Gliolan, which can help them to remove a larger proportion of it.

Brain tumour glowing red under a specific light. This image has kindly been provided by Medac Pharma LLP



Are all patients with brain tumours eligible for Gliolan?

Gliolan is only effective in certain types of brain tumours and can only be offered by neurosurgeons who have received specialist training. The final decision to offer Gliolan is taken by the neuro-oncology multi-disciplinary team which consists of a group of specialist healthcare professionals who work together to decide the best treatment for your tumour. 5 ALA use in high grade glioma is supported by National Institute of Clinical Excellence (2021)

It is vital that you inform us of any medical conditions or medicines that you take (including herbal and over the counter medications). You may not be eligible for Gliolan if any of the following apply:

- You have a hypersensitivity (allergy) to it
- You have porphyria of any form (a group of disorders resulting from a build up of natural chemicals)
- You are pregnant
- You have severe cardiac or liver failure
- If you have renal failure, your surgeon may decide against using it.

How is Gliolan taken?

Gliolan is taken on the day of surgery, a few hours before surgery. It needs to be taken in advance of surgery to allow for the chemical to be absorbed by the brain tumour. It is a liquid medicine which is mixed with water and usually has a slight bitter taste. 30–60 minutes after taking the drink, your blood pressure will need to be checked.

Information for Patients

What special precautions do I need to take with Gliolan?

After administration of Gliolan, exposure of eyes and skin to strong light sources (e.g. operating illumination, direct sunlight or brightly focused indoor light) should be avoided for 24 hours to prevent skin reactions. If you are in a room with windows, the blinds will be closed to protect you from sunlight. There are no additional precautions that you need to take after your operation and when being discharged from the hospital.

Co-administration with other potentially phototoxic substances (e.g. tetracyclines, sulfonamides, fluoroquinolones, hypericin extracts) should be avoided. If you are unsure, please check with your surgeon.

Within 24 hours after administration, other medicinal products that affect the liver should be avoided. In patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease (e.g. heart failure), this medicinal product should be used with caution.

What are the side effects of Gliolan?

Most medicines can cause side effects, though typically they are rare with Gliolan. The commonest reported side effects to Gliolan include:

- Feeling nauseous and sickly
- Sensitivity to light causing a skin rash
- Low blood pressure
- Abnormalities in blood results related to blood function (anaemia, clotting) and liver function. They may take several weeks to develop and normally do not cause symptoms

Can Gliolan be used in elderly patients?

There is no upper age limit with Gliolan providing there are no contraindications as mentioned above.

Can Gliolan be used in children?

The safety and efficacy of Gliolan in children and adolescents aged 0 to 18 years have not yet been established, though a number of centres have started using it in children without adverse effect.

Can Gliolan be used whilst breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding mothers may take Gliolan but will need to withhold breastfeeding their child for at least 24 hours after taking it.

Does Gliolan affect fertility?

It is unknown as there is no data available regarding the influence of 5-ALA on fertility.

Further support (Clinical Nurse Specialist/MacMillan Nurse)

Your clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or Macmillan nurse specialise in the care of patients with high grade brain tumours. This is someone you can talk to about worries or problems. They can provide:

- Advice and support to patients with high grade gliomas, their relatives, carers and friends
- Help with managing symptoms
- Advice about treatments such as surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy
- Information about your diagnosis

If you have any further queries, please contact your CNS on **0121 371 4740** during weekday office hours. If there is no answer, please leave a message and we will call you back.

Information for Patients

If you require an interpreter or need a document in another language or format e.g. large print or braille please ask your key worker for assistance.

Neuro-Oncology

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If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.