

## **Helping Hand™**

# Neuromuscular Blocking Agents: Cisatracurium (Nimbex®), Pancuronium (Pavulon®), Vecuronium (Norcuron®)

Cisatracurium (sis-at-ra-CURE-ee-um), vecuronium (vek-yoo-ROE-nee-um) and pancuronium (pan-cure-ROE-nee-um) are neuromuscular blocking agents. These are medicines that are given through an IV to some patients who are on ventilators (breathing machines) (Picture 1). These medicines stop muscle movement so the ventilator can better help your child breathe. This medicine will be used **only** while your child is in the hospital and on a breathing machine. It is **never** prescribed for use at home.

#### **Possible Side Effects**

- Skin problems (such as pressure sores) from lying still
- Anxiety
- Rapid heartbeat
- Blood pressure higher or lower than usual
- Continued muscle weakness (rarely happens)

### What about Side Effects

- The amount of medicine given is very small.

  Your child will be watched closely to avoid side effects.
- To avoid skin problems, your child will be turned often. His skin will be cared for using mild soap, water and lotion.
- Your child will also receive medicines to lessen anxiety and relieve pain.
- Your child will not be able to blink his eyes, but will receive care to keep the eyes moistened.

**Picture 1** Your child may receive this medicine while he or she is on a ventilator.

#### **Other Information**

- Your child can hear you and is aware of his surroundings. You can entertain your child while he is on a ventilator by talking, reading stories, having friends make tape recorded messages and playing soft music.
- Before the breathing tube connecting your child to the ventilator is taken out, this medicine will be stopped. Your child's ability to breathe on his own will be tested by respiratory therapists. When doctors determine your child can breathe without the help of a ventilator, the ventilator and breathing tube will be removed.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.