

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

Published by The Medical Letter, Inc. • 1000 Main Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801 • A Nonprofit Publication

Volume 50 (Issue 1280)
February 25, 2008

www.medicalletter.org

IN BRIEF

Sevelamer-Based Phosphate Binders

Sevelamer carbonate (*Renvela* – Genzyme), a buffered form of the anion-exchange resin sevelamer hydrochloride (*Renagel* – Genzyme),¹ has been approved by the FDA for use in patients with chronic kidney disease on dialysis. According to the manufacturer, *Renvela* will replace *Renagel*, which has been shown to induce or exacerbate metabolic acidosis in patients on dialysis. Two randomized, crossover studies found the two sevelamer salts equivalent in their ability to lower serum phosphate.^{2,3} Patients taking the carbonate had higher serum bicarbonate concentrations and fewer gastrointestinal adverse effects. Sevelamer carbonate, which is available in 800-mg tablets, can be substituted for the hydrochloride salt gram for gram. Recent studies in patients beginning hemodialysis have suggested a possible mortality benefit for sevelamer compared to less expensive calcium-based phosphate binders,^{4,5} but some critics are skeptical.⁶

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