

## Patient information

### Carbamazepine for Trigeminal Neuralgia

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

**This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking carbamazepine to treat Trigeminal Neuralgia. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

#### What is carbamazepine?

Carbamazepine is a medicine used to treat epilepsy. It can also be taken for nerve pain caused by diabetes (peripheral neuropathy) or if you have a painful condition of the face called trigeminal neuralgia. This medicine is only available on prescription. It's normal to take carbamazepine One -Four times a day. It usually takes a couple of weeks for carbamazepine to work. Carbamazepine is also called by the brand names Carbagen® and Tegretol®.

#### How do I take the medicine?

Try to space your doses of carbamazepine evenly through the day. For example, first thing in the morning, lunchtime, afternoon and in the evening. You can take it with or without food. To prevent the chance of side effects, your doctor will start you off on a low dose of carbamazepine. They will increase it gradually over a few days or weeks. Once you find a dose that suits you, it will usually stay the same - unless your condition changes, or your doctor starts you on a new medicine that may affect carbamazepine. Not everyone needs to have the maximum dose which is 1600mg daily for facial pain.

#### How much will I take?

Day	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Nighttime
1-3	100mg	0	0	100mg
4-6	100mg	100mg	0	100mg
7-9	100mg	100mg	100mg	100mg
10-12	200mg	100mg	100mg	100mg
13-15	200mg	100mg	100mg	200mg
16-18	200mg	200mg	100mg	200mg
19-21	200mg	200mg	200mg	200mg
22-24	200mg	200mg	200mg	400mg
35 onwards	400mg	200mg	200mg	400mg

## What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?

If it's less than eight hours before the next dose is due, it's better to leave out the missed dose and take your next dose as normal. **Do not take two doses at the same time to make up for a forgotten dose.** If you forget doses often, it may help to set an alarm to remind you. You could also ask your pharmacist for advice on other ways to help you remember to take your medicine.

## Are there any side effects?

Like all medicines, carbamazepine can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them.

### Skin rashes

It's common to get a skin rash with carbamazepine. Most skin rashes are not serious.

If you notice flu-like symptoms, followed by a red or purple rash that spreads and forms blisters which peel off, tell your GP or go to the Emergency Department (A&E) straight away, as this can develop into a life-threatening skin condition called severe cutaneous adverse reactions. Severe cutaneous adverse reactions are a rare side effect of carbamazepine. It's more likely to happen in the first eight weeks of using carbamazepine, or when the dose is increased too quickly. It can also happen if carbamazepine is stopped suddenly for a few days and then restarted at the same dose as before, without reducing the dose and then increasing it slowly again.

To help prevent the chance of you getting a rash that could be confused with severe cutaneous adverse reaction try not start any new medicines, foods or products during the first three months of treatment with carbamazepine. It's also good to not start using carbamazepine within two weeks of a viral infection, vaccination, or rash caused by something else.

### Common side effects

Common side effects of carbamazepine include:

- feeling dizzy, sleepy or tired
- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- headaches
- dry mouth
- putting on weight.

These side effects may happen in more than 1 in 100 people. They're usually mild and go away by themselves.

### Serious side effects

It's unusual to have serious side effects after taking carbamazepine. Tell a doctor straight away if you have:

- unusual bleeding or bruising, mouth sores, infections, a high temperature or sore throat - these can be signs of a blood disorder.

- thoughts of harming or killing yourself - a small number of people taking carbamazepine have had suicidal thoughts.
- a severe rash with flushing, blisters or ulcers - these can be signs of severe cutaneous adverse reactions.
- yellowing of skin or whites of eyes - these can be signs of a liver problem.
- pain in your joints and muscles, a rash across the bridge of your nose and cheeks, and problems breathing - these are signs of lupus (systemic lupus erythematosus).

### **Serious allergic reaction**

In rare cases, it's possible to have a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to carbamazepine.

Contact your GP or go to the Emergency Department straight away if:

- you get a skin rash that may include itchy, red, swollen, blistered or peeling skin
- you're wheezing
- you get tightness in the chest or throat
- you have trouble breathing or talking
- your mouth, face, lips, tongue or throat start swelling

These are not all the side effects of carbamazepine. For a full list see the leaflet inside your medicine packet.

### **Is there anything else I need to know?**

There's no firm evidence carbamazepine is harmful to an unborn baby. However, for safety, your doctor will only advise you to take it in pregnancy if the benefits of the medicine outweigh the risks. Carbamazepine does pass into breast milk. There have been some reports of side effects in breastfed babies, including sleeping more and not feeding well.

There are some medicines that may interfere with the effects of carbamazepine. Please make sure your hospital doctor is aware of your other medications.

Do not take St John's wort, the herbal remedy for depression, while you are being treated with carbamazepine. This is because St John's wort may make carbamazepine less effective.

### **How do I get a repeat prescription?**

Your GP will give you a repeat prescription for carbamazepine, which you can take to your local pharmacy. Please make sure you request your repeat prescription early enough so that you don't run out or risk missing any doses of your medication.

For further information about the potential risks and side effects, please read the information leaflet supplied by the manufacturer within the box. Alternatively, please contact the Oral Medicine Department. The department is open Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

## Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further information

### Oral Medicine Department

The department is open Monday to Friday

9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Tel: 0151 706 5060

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5060

Author: Department of Oral Medicine

Review date: September 2028

***This information leaflet was reproduced with the permission of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Oral Medicine Department.***

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل انتمان المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعية الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والإلكترونية.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 ( Moon ) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل می‌توانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانیاری پیومندیدار بهو نه‌خوشانه‌ی له‌لایمن تراسته‌وه پسه‌مند کراون، نه‌گمر داوا بکریت له فؤرماته‌کانی تردا بریتی له زمانه‌کانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنه‌وه)، چاپی گهوره، شریتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و ئلیکترۆنیکی هیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字  
体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.