

## Patient information

### Oxcarbazepine for Trigeminal Neuralgia

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

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

#### What is oxcarbazepine?

Oxcarbazepine 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 oxcarbazepine 1-4 times a day. It usually takes a couple of weeks for oxcarbazepine to start working.

#### Taking an unlicensed medicine

The use of oxcarbazepine for treating Trigeminal Neuralgia is unlicensed, which means that the manufacturer of the medicine has not specified it can be used in this way. However, there is evidence that it works to treat this particular condition.

#### How do I take the medicine?

Try to space your oxcarbazepine doses 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 oxcarbazepine.

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 oxcarbazepine

#### How much will I take?

Day	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Nighttime
1-3	150mg	0	0	150mg
4-14	150mg	150mg	0	150mg
15-21	150mg	150mg	150mg	150mg
22-28	300mg	150mg	150mg	300mg
29-34	300mg	300mg	150mg	300mg
35-40	300mg	300mg	300mg	300mg
41-45	300mg	300mg	300mg	450mg
46-50 onwards	300mg	300mg	300mg	600mg

## 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 2 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, oxcarbazepine can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them.

### Skin rashes

It's common to get a skin rash with oxcarbazepine. 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 attend 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 oxcarbazepine. It's more likely to happen in the first eight weeks of using oxcarbazepine, or when the dose is increased too quickly. It can also happen if oxcarbazepine 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 reactions, try not to start any new medicines, foods or products during the first three months of treatment with oxcarbazepine. It's also good to not start using oxcarbazepine within two weeks of having a viral infection, vaccination, or rash caused by something else.

### Common side effects

Common side effects of oxcarbazepine 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.

Keep taking the medicine but talk to your pharmacist or doctor if these side effects bother you or don't go away.

### Serious side effects

It's unusual to have serious side effects after taking oxcarbazepine. 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 oxcarbazepine 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 oxcarbazepine.

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 oxcarbazepine. For a full list see the leaflet inside your medicine packet.

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

There's no firm evidence oxcarbazepine 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. Oxcarbazepine does pass into breast milk, but the amount is probably too small to be harmful.

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

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

Your GP will give you a repeat prescription for oxcarbazepine, 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.**

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**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5060**

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