Endocrine Investigation Unit
Wolfson, Diabetes and Endocrine Clinic

Cinacalcet used to treat hypercalcaemia

What is hypercalcaemia?

Hypercalcaemia is a condition where your blood levels of calcium are too high. Calcium is important to your body and is involved in making sure your nerves transmit signals around your body correctly. The calcium in your blood has been released from your bones.

Signs and symptoms of hypercalcaemia

You may experience some or all of these:

- excessive thirst
- passing a lot of urine
- indigestion
- depression
- muscle weakness
- constipation
- nausea
- lack of appetite and fatigue

If your blood calcium levels have been high for a long time you may have kidney stones. By removing the calcium from your bones you may develop some types of bone disease.

What causes hypercalcaemia?

One of the most common causes of hypercalcaemia is hyperparathyroidism. The parathyroid glands are found near the thyroid gland in your neck. There are four glands, two on the left hand side and two on the right. They are very small and produce a hormone called parathyroid hormone. This hormone encourages the release of calcium stored in the bones into the blood stream. When one or more of these glands becomes over active and produces more parathyroid hormone then too much calcium is released into your blood stream causing hypercalcaemia.

What is the treatment for hypercalcaemia?

If the hypercalcaemia is caused by hyperparathyroidism then it may be possible to remove the gland that is over producing parathyroid hormone. This is not always a suitable option for all patients so your endocrine doctor may prescribe a medication called cinacalcet.

This medication will reduce the effectiveness of the parathyroid hormone, reducing its effect and so reduce the amount of calcium in your blood.
How to take cinacalcet

Your endocrine doctor will prescribe you this medication and the dose you need to take. You will need to have regular blood tests to check your calcium levels so the endocrine doctor can check that you are on the correct dose. These blood tests can be done at the hospital or your GP surgery and we will let you know when you need to have this done.

The tablets must be swallowed whole and not split or crushed. They should be taken with a meal or very shortly afterwards.

If you miss a dose then take it as soon as you remember but if this is close to your next dose then miss it out, do not double your dose to catch up.

Cinacalcet can affect the way some other medications work, so please let your endocrine doctor know what medications you take before starting it and also if you start any new medications.

If too much of this medication is taken it can make you blood calcium levels too low and you may experience the following:

- numbness
- tingling sensations
- unusual feelings in your lips, tongue, fingers or toes
- muscle aches or cramps or unusual muscle spasms or fatigue.

Please let your doctor know if you do experience any of these signs or symptoms when taking cinacalcet.

Side effects or adverse effects from cinacalcet

You could experience any of the following side effects:

an upset stomach
dizziness
nausea
weakness and chest pain

If you experience chest pain then please contact either your GP, or the endocrine specialist nurses, during our working hours. If serious and out of hours then you should attend your nearest A&E department.

Please store your medication safely and at room temperature away from light and moisture.

Contacts and further information

The endocrine investigation unit, telephone: 01223 217848 between 08:00 to 16:00 hours.
General Information

Discounted parking is available for patients attending clinic appointments lasting longer than three hours. Please present your appointment letter to the car park attendant to receive this discount.

Food and drink – There is a coffee shop in the treatment centre atrium and further food and drink facilities in the main hospital concourse.

We are a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language or audio, please contact Interpreting services on telephone: 01223 256998, or email: interpreting@addenbrookes.nhs.uk For Large Print information please contact the patient information team: patient-information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

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