Department of Neurosciences

Oxcarbazepine drug information

For

- Patients
- Staff

Drug brand names

- Oxcarbazepine
- Trileptal

Formulation

Oxcarbazepine is available in 150mg, 300mg and 600mg tablets. It is also available in form of a suspension containing 300mg per ml.

Uses

Oxcarbazepine is used to reduce seizure frequency and severity in people who have epilepsy. It is also used to treat focal (partial) seizures and partial seizures that progress to generalised tonic clonic seizures. It can also be used to treat certain types of pain.

Oxcarbazepine can be used as a single drug or part of a combination of other antiepileptic drugs. It is available in 150mg, 300mg and 600 mg tablets. It is also available in form of a suspension containing 300mg per 5ml.

Side effects (the list of side effects is not exhaustive, please refer to product literature for full list)

Oxcarbazepine is generally well tolerated. Side effects become more likely the higher the dose of medication taken and will usually improve if the dose is reduced again. They sometimes occur temporarily when the medication is started or as the dose is increased.

- Common side effects are:
  - Nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.
  - Reduced sodium levels – your GP will be able to monitor this. Oxcarbazepine should not usually be used in patients with kidney problems or heart failure.
  - Headache, dizziness, feeling sleepy or tired.
  - Double or blurred vision.
Less commonly
- Some patients may experience sleepiness, confusion, tremor, mood or behavioural changes, unsteadiness of walking, vertigo and problems paying attention. Side effects often settle after taking medication for a few weeks.
- All antiepileptic medication can cause feelings of depression, or severe mood changes. If you experience any of these, please contact your specialist.
- About one in twenty patients will experience an allergic rash, a little like sunburn or milder skin irritation. You should consult your doctor or epilepsy specialist nurse as soon as possible if this happens.
- Persons identified to be of Han Chinese, Thai (south east Asian origin) are at increased risk of skin rash and would require a specific blood test prior to starting treatment.
- Medically serious side effects are very rare but may affect the blood or the liver. Blood tests will be performed where appropriate.

If you experience any of the following side effects seek medical attention:
- Confusion
- Muscle twitching
- Fever
- Rash, blistering or mouth ulcers
- Bruising or bleeding
- Unusual lethargy

In the event of any of these side effects, contact the epilepsy nurse (contact details are at the end of the leaflet), or your GP.

Contraception
Oxcarbazepine reduces the amount of the oral contraceptive pill in your body so that a higher dose pill is required. Contraception may remain less effective, especially if there is breakthrough bleeding between periods. Another reliable contraceptive method such as condoms should be used until this problem is corrected.
Oxcarbazepine does not affect the three month contraceptive injections and the hormone coil (Mirena).

Pregnancy and breast feeding
If you are taking any anti-epileptic drug, you should ask to see your specialist and discuss the best preparations and doses before you conceive in order to reduce the risk of malformations to your baby. Once you are already pregnant it is too late to make these changes. The risks to your baby from Oxcarbazepine are not fully understood, it has caused problems in animal studies, and spina bifida has been noted in humans.
In order to minimise risk we recommend you take folic acid 5mg daily twelve weeks prior to conception until the end of week 12 of pregnancy. Oxcarbazepine should not be used when breastfeeding according to the manufacturer, the drug passes into breast milk with unknown effects on the infant. The baby may have poor suckling, vomiting and/or sedation. Please seek specialist advice if you wish to take Oxcarbazepine whilst breastfeeding.

**Drug interactions**

Medications such as paracetamol and aspirin can be given with Oxcarbazepine. Always remind your doctor or pharmacist that you take Oxcarbazepine when new medication is discussed or started. Carbamazepine can alter levels of a variety of medication; also other medication could alter the effectiveness of Carbamazepine.

**Other useful information**

- Oxcarbazepine can be taken with or without food. Do not stop taking your medication suddenly and without consultation with your doctor.
- Oxcarbazepine in liquid or tablet form does not require special storage conditions.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember but do not take two doses at the same time.
- Keep a record of your seizures when you start any new medication. This will help to determine future drug dosages.

**Contact details**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the epilepsy nurse specialist on 01223 217992.

The information on this leaflet is not exhaustive. Please refer to the patient information leaflet prepared by the manufacturer of your drug which can be found in the medicine packaging.
We are now 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, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk. Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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