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## Department of Cardiology/Pharmacy

# Amiodarone

### Action

Amiodarone is used to treat fast or irregular heartbeats.

Amiodarone works by slowing down the electrical impulses that cause fast or irregular heartbeats.

### Taking your amiodarone

When first starting amiodarone, you may take a reducing course such as one tablet three times a day for a week, then one tablet twice a day for a week.

For most patients who then need to continue to take amiodarone the regular dose will usually be one tablet each day.

### Problems to watch for

- Amiodarone may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Cover your head with a hat. If possible, wear a long-sleeved top. Wear sunscreen (Factor 25) on exposed skin. You should also avoid using sunbeds whilst taking amiodarone.
- Amiodarone may cause some patients to develop small deposits on the cornea. This does not interfere with daytime vision but you might be dazzled by headlights at night. Be very careful if you drive. Tell your doctor if this becomes a problem.
- Other side effects which can occur with amiodarone are: -
  - Muscle pain.
  - Shortness of breath.
  - Numbness in fingers or toes.
  - General tiredness, weight loss or fever.
  - Metallic taste.
  - Blue/grey discoloration of the skin.
  - Headache.
  - Cough.

Tell your doctor if these side effects occur.

- Whilst taking amiodarone you will have regular tests of your eyesight, thyroid gland and liver.
- Amiodarone should be avoided during pregnancy and breast feeding. Women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breast feeding should talk to their doctor before taking this medicine.

**Note: Moderate your alcohol intake and avoid grapefruit juice if you are taking amiodarone as it may increase the risk of side-effects.** Always read the patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

**Help with this leaflet:**



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**Document history**

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