

Department of Neurosciences

Carbamazepine drug information

Carbamazepine is one of the most widely used anti epileptic medication worldwide. It has a good record at reducing frequency and severity of epileptic seizures. It is available in form of tablets of various strengths, oral liquid containing 100mg/5ml and suppositories each containing 125mg.

Drug brand names

- Carbamazepine.
- Tegretol
- Tegretol retard
- Carbagen

We recommend you receive the same brand each time you have your prescription renewed.

Uses

Carbamazepine is used to reduce seizure frequency and severity in people who have epilepsy. It is also used to treat certain types of pain and bipolar disorder.

Side effects

About half of the patients taking Carbamazepine will experience some side effects. These are usually mild and are temporary.

- Dose-related side effects become more likely the higher the dose of medication and 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 sleepiness, mild unsteadiness of walking, dizziness and double vision. They often settle after a few weeks on the medication.
- Some patients may experience nausea and vomiting.
- About one in fifty patients will experience an allergic rash, a little like sunburn or milder skin irritation. You should consult your doctor if this happens. This may mean that the tablet has to be stopped.
- Medically serious side effects are very rare but may affect the blood or the liver. Blood tests will be performed where appropriate.
- Research shows that carbamazepine may slightly speed up the thinning of the bones with age. Taking a diet rich in calcium or taking vitamin D supplements may help prevent this.

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

Carbamazepine reduces the amount of the oral contraceptive pill in your body. Therefore a higher dose pill is required. Even then, contraception may be slightly less effective, especially if there is breakthrough bleeding between periods. You should consider also using a barrier method until this problem is resolved. Carbamazepine does not affect the three month contraceptive injections or the hormone coil.

Pregnancy

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 carbamazepine are about one in 100 of spina bifida. This may be reduced by taking 5mg folic acid supplements daily from at least eight weeks prior to conception until at least 13 weeks of pregnancy. Other risks include delay in mental development of your baby.

Drug interactions

Ordinary medications such as paracetamol and aspirin can be given with carbamazepine. For any other medication you are prescribed or buy over the counter, always check with your doctor or pharmacist if there are any interactions with these and Carbamazepine.

Other useful information

- Try to take the medicine at the same time every day.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at once.
- Do not stop taking carbamazepine unless your doctor tells you to. Stopping Carbamazepine / Tegretol suddenly can trigger withdrawal seizures. Make sure you do not run out and only stop taking it under supervision.
- Keep carbamazepine at room temperature and in the packaging that it comes in.
- Keep a record of your seizures when you start any new medication. This will help 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 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:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: 01223 216032 یا patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পেতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

Document history

Authors	Erica Chisanga & Dr Mark Manford
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
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