



Oxcarbazepine for preventing seizures

This leaflet is about the use of oxcarbazepine for preventing seizures. (Seizures may also be called convulsions or fits.)



This leaflet has been written specifically about the use of this medicine in children. The information may differ from that provided by the manufacturer. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Do not stop giving oxcarbazepine suddenly, as your child may have more seizures.

Name of drug

Oxcarbazepine

Brand name: Trileptal®

Why is it important to take this medicine?

It is important that your child takes oxcarbazepine regularly so that they have fewer seizures.

What is oxcarbazepine available as?

- **Tablets:** 150 mg, 300 mg, 600 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 300 mg in 5 mL

When should I give oxcarbazepine?

- Oxcarbazepine is usually given **twice** each day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Ideally, these times are 10–12 hours apart, for example some time between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8 pm.

Give the medicine at about the same time(s) each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of oxcarbazepine (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

Your doctor will start your child on a low dose, then gradually increase it over a few days or weeks to help your child get used to the medicine. If you are not sure how much to give, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.

How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablets.



Liquid medicine: Shake the bottle well and measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or a medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.

When should the medicine start working?

It may take a few weeks for oxcarbazepine to work properly, so your child may still have seizures during this time. This is because the amount of medicine has to be increased slowly.

Continue to give the medicine in the way that you have been told to. Oxcarbazepine may not stop your child's seizures completely. If you are worried about whether it is helping, contact your doctor.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of oxcarbazepine, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of oxcarbazepine you **do not** need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If you remember up to 4 hours after you should have given a dose, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at about 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.



Never give a double dose of oxcarbazepine.

What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give an extra dose of oxcarbazepine by mistake, but side-effects may increase. If you are concerned that you may have given too much, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647 in England and Wales; 08454 24 24 24 in Scotland). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about

999 If your child is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to oxcarbazepine. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance **straight away**.

999 If your child has a rash with a sore throat and is also generally unwell, and has a fever (temperature above 38°C) or unusual bruises or bleeding, or if they seem very confused and their muscles start to twitch, contact your doctor or take them to hospital **straight away**, as this may indicate a more serious reaction.

Other side-effects you need to know about

Oxcarbazepine usually causes only mild side-effects, which should get better as your child's body gets used to the medicine. If they are still a problem after 2 weeks, or you are worried, contact your doctor, but continue to give oxcarbazepine.

- Your child may feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit) or have stomach ache, diarrhoea or constipation (difficulty doing a poo).
- Your child may have a headache or feel dizzy, tired (lethargic) or sleepy (drowsy).

- Your child may seem less alert than normal, and may say they cannot think clearly or remember things, or their coordination may be affected. They may also have changes in mood.
- They may develop a rash.
- Your child's hair may become thinner and some may fall out. If this happens discuss it with your doctor at your next visit.
- Some children find that their eyesight is blurry or double.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as oxcarbazepine?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?


Epilepsy and pregnancy


- Pregnancy presents a risk to both the mother with epilepsy and her unborn baby. If your daughter has sex, it is essential that she uses adequate contraception to prevent an unplanned pregnancy.
- If your daughter is worried that she may be pregnant, it is important that she sees your family doctor as early as possible. Your daughter should keep taking her medication until she sees her doctor.

Oxcarbazepine and pregnancy


- Doctors don't yet know whether oxcarbazepine can harm an unborn baby. Your daughter must always speak to her doctor before trying to conceive.
- The oral contraceptive pill may not work for women or girls who are taking oxcarbazepine.

General advice about medicines for seizures


 **Do not** suddenly stop giving any of these medicines to your child, as they may have a seizure. If you are worried, contact your doctor but carry on giving the medicine to your child as usual.

 If your child seems to have more seizures than usual, contact your doctor or epilepsy nurse.

- If your doctor decides to stop a particular medicine, they will discuss this with you. You will usually reduce the dose bit by bit.

 **Do not** change the dose of any drug without talking to your doctor first.

- It is best that your child always has the same brand of each medicine, as there may be differences between brands. Keep a record of which medicines your child has.
- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give the medicine(s) to your child. Never give them to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.

 If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor straight away.

- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicines you have at home have not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where I should keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about oxcarbazepine and about other medicines used to treat epilepsy.

You can also get useful information from:

NHS Direct (England) - www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk - 0845 4647

NHS 24 (Scotland) - www.nhs24.com - 08454 24 24 24

NHS Direct Wales/Galw Iechyd Cymru

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk - 0845 4647

NI Direct (Northern Ireland) - www.nidirect.gov.uk

Young Epilepsy

www.youngpilepsy.org.uk - Helpline: 01342 831 342

Epilepsy Society

www.epilepsysociety.org.uk - Helpline: 01494 601 400

Epilepsy Action

www.epilepsy.org.uk - Helpline: 0808 800 5050

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



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The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.