Calcium

Medication Information Leaflet

What is the medication used for?

Calcium is a type of mineral naturally found in some foods that helps the body make strong bones and teeth. It is usually available in combination with Vitamin D, which helps with calcium absorption. Calcium and Vitamin D aid in osteoporosis and fracture prevention.

Calcium may also be used as a dietary supplement in individuals who are unable to obtain sufficient calcium in their regular diet, or in those who have an increased calcium needs, such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and adolescents.

In chronic kidney disease (CKD), calcium salts are used to bind and reduce phosphate absorption from food. This in turn lowers phosphate levels in the body, thereby preventing the progression of bone disorder and other complications in CKD.

How should I take the medication?

- Take this medication as prescribed by your healthcare professional
- Do not stop taking your medications without checking with your healthcare professional
- For Osteoporosis or as Calcium Supplementation:
  - Calcium carbonate or calcium phosphate tablets: This medicine should be taken after food for better absorption.
  - Calcium citrate, calcium lactate, calcium gluconate: You may take this medication with or without food.
- For Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD):
  - Calcium carbonate or calcium acetate: Chew or crush the tablets and take together with food at the beginning of a meal, for better result.

What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Do not double your dose or use extra medication to make up for the missed dose.

What precautions should I follow when taking the medication?

Before starting on this medication, inform your healthcare professional if you:

- Are allergic to this medication, or any of the other ingredients in this medication

- Have a medical condition called Hypercalcemia where there is high calcium levels in the body
- Have a medical condition called Hypercalciuria where there is excessive urinary clearance of calcium
- Are experiencing chronic constipation
- Are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies

What are some side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

What are some other side-effects of this medication?

- Stomach upset, flatulence or bloating
  - You may reduce the stomach discomfort by taking medication with or after food
- Constipation
  - Drink more water (unless you have water intake restriction or advised otherwise by your healthcare professional) and eat more high- fibre foods such as vegetables, fruits and whole grains

Speak to your doctor if the side effects do not go away.

What food or medication should I avoid when taking this medication?

Space calcium supplements 2 hours apart from medications such as iron supplements, Levothyroxine and certain antibiotics (e.g. Quinolones - Ciprofloxacin, Tetracyclines). You may check with your healthcare professional for more information.

How should I store the medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children. Throw away all expired medications.

How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.

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