

# Ambrisentan

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

Ambrisentan is used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension. It is an endothelin receptor antagonist (ERA) that lowers the pressure in the pulmonary arteries (blood vessels in the lungs that transfer oxygen into the blood) by blocking the effects of endothelin. It may have the potential to reverse some of the damage done by the condition. This should also improve symptoms such as breathlessness and increase your ability to exercise.

This medication may also be used for other conditions as determined by your doctor.

## How should I take/use this medication?

- Do not stop taking your medication without checking with your healthcare professional as it may make your condition worse.
- You may take this medication with or without food.
- This medication is initially started at a lower dose. Your condition will be monitored closely. Your doctor may later adjust your dosage to better control your condition.

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

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose. Then take your next dose at the usual time. Do not take two doses to make up for the missed dose.

## What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication.
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
  - As this medication may cause birth defects, female patients of childbearing age should take precautions by using at least 2 reliable methods of contraception to avoid pregnancy. If you suspect you may be pregnant, inform your doctor as soon as possible.
  - You should not become pregnant for at least 1 month after stopping this medication.
- You have or have had liver or kidney disease.

- You have a condition called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), whereby there is scarring in your lungs.
- You are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies.

## **What are some common side-effects of this medication?**

These side effects may be minimized by starting with a lower dose and may improve or go away with time. Inform your healthcare professional if it becomes bothersome or does not go away.

- Flushing, low blood pressure, fainting or headache
  - Rise slowly from a sitting or lying position to reduce giddiness when changing position
- Leg swelling (oedema)
- Flu-like symptoms such as nose and throat irritation, stuffy nose or back pain

## **What are some rare but serious 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

Other rare but serious side effects include:

- Changes in liver function: Signs include dark urine or light coloured stools, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomach pain, yellowing of your eyes or skin.
- Low haemoglobin levels (anaemia): Signs include feeling more tired, weak or shortness of breath.

These side-effects are usually not significant, they are often treatable once detected early. You will need frequent blood tests to monitor for them.

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

Ambrisentan may reduce fertility in men by reducing sperm count when taken for long term. Discuss with your healthcare professional if you have any concerns about it.

## **What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?**

Some medications may interact with Ambrisentan and affect their effectiveness or increase the risk of side-effects. However, these medications may also be important for your treatment. Inform your healthcare professional of the other medications you are currently

taking. Examples include:

- Cyclosporine, a medication for suppression of the immune system
- Medications for bacterial infections (e.g. clarithromycin, erythromycin)
- Medications for fungal infections (e.g. itraconazole, ketoconazole)

Consult your healthcare professional if you are unsure whether your existing medications can be taken together with this medication.

## **How should I store this medication?**

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

## **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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