

# Flecainide

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

This medication is used to suppress and prevent the recurrence of abnormal heart rhythm. It works by slowing an overactive heart and correcting irregular heartbeats to a normal rhythm so that the heart works properly to pump blood.

## How should I take/use this medication?

- Do not stop taking your medication without checking with your healthcare professional.
- You may take this medication with or without food.
- The doctor may adjust the dose based on your condition. Do not take this medication more often than directed and do not stop until instructed by your doctor.
- For tablets: Swallow tablet with a glass of water. Do not crush, break, or chew the tablet.
- For liquid medicine: Shake well before using. Use a medicine spoon or the graduated oral syringe provided to measure out the correct amount. Do not use household spoons as they may not be accurate.

Separate the administration of flecainide from the following food by at least 1-2 hours as it may affect the absorption of flecainide:

- Milk (including Breast milk and infant formula)
- Dairy products (e.g. Cheese, yoghurt)

For babies / infants, report any changes in dietary milk intake to the doctor as dose adjustments may be needed.

## 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.
- You are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies.
- You have kidney or liver disease.
- You have a heart condition known as heart failure, or recently had a heart attack.
- You have a pacemaker or defibrillator.

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

- Headache, dizziness
  - Try to avoid sudden changes in posture – stand up slowly from sitting or lying positions, and sit or lie down if feeling giddy.
- Problems with your vision – sudden change (blurring) in eyesight, yellow vision
  - Do not drive or operate tools or heavy machinery if your vision is affected. Your doctor may also recommend an eyesight test to monitor for such side-effects.
- Nausea, vomiting, stomach upset (constipation, diarrhea)
- Decreased appetite

For infants and young children, blood tests may be required to monitor the level of flecainide. A gene test may also be required to guide drug dosing and for making dose adjustments.

## What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

It is very important that you are on regular follow-up with your doctor to monitor for any possible side-effects. Inform your healthcare professional if you have any of the following side-effects.

This medication may worsen existing abnormal heart rhythm, or cause new irregular heartbeats. Symptoms of abnormal heart rhythm include one or more of the following:

- Irregular heartbeat e.g. slowed heartbeat or palpitations
- Severe dizziness or fainting spells
- Difficulties in breathing or chest pain

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

Some medications may interact with Flecainide 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:

- Medications for bacterial infections (e.g. clarithromycin, erythromycin)
- Medications for fungal infections (e.g. itraconazole, ketoconazole)
- Medications for viral infections (e.g. Ritonavir)

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?**

For tablets: Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight.

For liquid medicine: Store in the refrigerator between 2-8°C. Do not freeze.

Keep this medication away from children.

## **How should I throw away this medication safely?**

For general waste: 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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