

Gemfibrozil

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Gemfibrozil belongs to the class of medications called fibrates. Fibrates work by speeding the natural processes that remove cholesterol from the body. They lower the amount of 'fat' (triglyceride) and 'bad cholesterol' (low density lipoprotein or LDL-cholesterol) as well as increase the amount of 'good cholesterol' (high density lipoprotein or HDL-cholesterol) in the blood.

High 'bad cholesterol' levels can cause your blood vessels to clog up and lead to chest pain (angina), heart attack or stroke. Hence, fibrates may reduce your risk for heart attack and stroke.

How should I take/use this medication?

- Do not stop taking your medication without checking with your healthcare professional. If you stop taking your medication, your cholesterol level may rise again.
- This medicine should be taken before food, on an empty stomach.
- If you are taking cholestyramine or colestipol, take it 4 to 6 hours before or 1 hour after gemfibrozil.

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 allergic to any other fibrates, or to any other medications.
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- You are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies.
- You have liver, kidney or gallbladder problems.
- You have an underactive thyroid gland.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

- Nausea
- Heartburn, stomach pain
- Constipation, diarrhoea
- Joint pain, muscle pain, back pain
- Skin rashes
- Headache

Inform your healthcare professional if these side-effects do not go away and are affecting your daily life.

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

Very rarely, fibrates may cause muscle or liver problems. These symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Breakdown of muscles - Unexplained, severe muscle pain that does not go away, muscle weakness/ cramps all over your body or dark tea-coloured urine
- Liver injury - Dark coloured urine, light coloured stools, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, yellowing of skin or eyes

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 fibrates 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 medications you are currently taking. Examples include:

- Medications for cholesterol-lowering (e.g. cholestyramine, colestipol, statins, ezetimibe)
- Medications used to suppress immune system (e.g. cyclosporine, tacrolimus)
- Warfarin, a type of blood-thinner
- Specific medications used to treat Diabetes (e.g. repaglinide, pioglitazone)

- Medications for viral infection (e.g. Vosevi™ containing voxilaprevir, Zepatier™ containing grazoprevir, Viekira Pak™ containing dasabuvir)
- Specific medications used to treat cancer (e.g. dabrafenib, enzalutamide)
- Selexipag, a medication used for pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure in the lungs)

How should I store this 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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