

# Lamotrigine

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

Lamotrigine is used to control seizures (commonly known as fits) and as a mood stabiliser to reduce mood swings in bipolar disorder. It may also be used for other conditions related to the nervous system.

## How should I take/use this medication?

Follow the instructions on your medication label and take the medication as prescribed by your doctor.

You can take this medication with or without food.

Dispersible tablets can be chewed, swallowed whole or dispersed in room temperature water. To disperse the tablet, cover the tablet with one teaspoon of water and allow it to dissolve. The entire amount should then be taken or consumed.

You may not experience any benefits immediately after starting the medication as it may take up to a few weeks before this medication can exert its full effects. You should continue to take your medication regularly as instructed by your doctor even if you feel well. Stopping your medication without informing your healthcare professional may cause your condition to worsen quickly.

Do not stop taking or adjust the dose of this medication without consulting your healthcare professional. Do not change the medication that was dispensed to you without informing your healthcare professional.

## **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 take?**

Inform your healthcare professional if you have the following medical conditions before starting on lamotrigine:

- Liver problems
- Kidney problems
- Drug allergies

For female patients of child-bearing age: Discuss with your doctor regarding family planning if you will be starting or currently taking lamotrigine.

Consult your healthcare professional immediately if your seizures get worse or become different after you have started this medication.

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

Like all medications, lamotrigine may cause some possible side effects but not everyone experiences them. Consult your healthcare professional if any of the side effects lasts more than a few days or become severe and bothersome.

The common side effects of lamotrigine include:

- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
  - Get up slowly from sitting or lying down position
- Drowsiness, fatigue
  - Avoid driving, operate machinery or engaging in strenuous physical activities
- Constipation
  - Drink more water, eat more high-fibre foods, and exercise regularly
- Nausea, vomiting
  - Take the medication with or after food to reduce nausea and vomiting
  - Avoid food that is too rich, spicy or has strong smells
  - Do not take the medication with carbonated drinks
- Headache
  - Take paracetamol if needed to relieve headache
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Blurred or double vision or uncontrollable eye jerking
- Joint pain, neck pain, numbness in the hands and feet (“pins and needles” sensation)
- Swelling of hands or legs from water retention - to inform doctor if bothersome or persistent
- Painful menstruation

## 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

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

If the following serious side effects happen, you should consult your healthcare professional immediately:

- Blistering, peeling, red skin rash due to Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS) and Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (TEN)
  - SJS is a rare and serious skin reaction. Symptoms include face swelling, blisters on skin, skin rashes that spread within hours to days.
  - TEN is a more severe form of skin reaction. Symptoms include fever and flu-like symptoms, blisters on skin, skin rashes that spread within hours to days. Areas such as the mouth, eyes, genitals are commonly involved.
  - It usually occurs within the first few months (monitor closely for the first 3 months) of treatment.
  - As SJS and TEN progress rapidly, please consult healthcare professional if you show the first sign of rash.
- Blurred or double vision or abnormal eye movements
- Prolonged fever or chills, flu-like symptoms, sore throat
- Increase in seizures
- Unusual bleeding and bruising
- Liver problems: Dark-coloured urine or light-coloured stools, yellowing of your eyes or skin, severe loss of appetite, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting that does not go away, pain, tenderness or unusual swelling over the liver area in the upper right belly

In rare cases, this medication may cause the following changes to a person's mental condition, especially in the first few weeks of treatment or during dose changes:

- Worsening agitation, restlessness, violent behaviour, or
- New or worsening thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life
- Other changes in mood or behaviour

Please inform your doctor as soon as possible, or for your family or caregiver to inform your doctor if you are unable to seek treatment on your own.

Do not stop taking this medication on your own without discussing with your doctor.

It is important to note that your doctor has prescribed this medication as he/ she thinks you will benefit more from taking this medication over the possible risks that it may cause, which have a low chance of occurring, and most people take this medication without any of such problems.

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

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication as it can cause excessive drowsiness.

Inform your healthcare professional regarding your choices if you intend to use birth control while on lamotrigine.

Please consult your healthcare professional before using any other medications, including over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbal products.

## **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 this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing it 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. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.*

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