

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Varenicline (Champix®)



What is Varenicline (Champix®)?

- It is an oral medicine that helps you to quit smoking.
- It can help to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms that are commonly experienced when one stops smoking.
- If you smoke while on this treatment, Varenicline can also reduce the enjoyment of cigarettes.

How is Varenicline (Champix®) Taken?

- Set a date to quit smoking, and inform your doctor of your quit date. Varenicline should be started one week before your quit date.
- Varenicline should be taken as prescribed by your doctor. The usual dosing schedule is shown below. Please note that the dose may vary depending on your other medical conditions.

Day 1 to Day 3	Dose 0.5mg once daily
Day 4 to Day 7	Dose 0.5mg in the morning and in the evening
Day 8 onwards	Dose 1mg in the morning and in the evening

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose (3-4 hours before your next dose), take only the usual dose. Never take a double dosage to make up for the missed dose.
- Treatment with Varenicline usually lasts for 12 weeks. In some cases, an additional course of 12 weeks may be required to increase your chances of quitting.

Can Varenicline (Champix®) be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Varenicline may interact with other medications, so some medications may need adjustments in the dosage after you quit smoking. These include theophylline, warfarin, insulin etc.
- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are using other medicines or treatment to help you to quit smoking.
- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including supplements, traditional or herbal remedies.

What are the Important Side Effects of Varenicline (Champix®)?

- This medication should be beneficial to help you quit smoking, although it may result in side effects.
- It is important that you recognise the side effects and know how to manage them.
- Seizures, behaviour change, agitation, depressed mood, suicidal thoughts and actions have been reported in some patients while taking or after stopping Varenicline. If you experience any of these side effects, inform your doctor immediately.

Side Effect	Management
Nausea Abdominal pain Flatulence Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often improves after a week or so, as the body becomes used to the medicine. • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Constipation Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient intake of fluids and fibre to prevent constipation, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Dry mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suck ice chips, sugarless candy or use saliva replacement products to relieve dry mouth.

Inflammation of nose and throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Flu-like symptoms Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Muscle aches, pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Depressed mood Agitation Anxiety Suicidal thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.
Difficulty sleeping Abnormal dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often improves after a week or so, as the body becomes used to the medicine. • Maintain good sleep hygiene by avoiding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Naps in the day ○ Stimulating activities or beverages ○ Using the bedroom for activities other than sleep • Inform your doctor if these symptoms persist.
Fatigue or lethargy Headache Drowsiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive or operate machinery until you know how your body reacts to the medicine.
Chest Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor immediately.

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

What are Other Side Effects That I Should Take Note of?

- It is also important to note that smoking cessation, with or without medications or treatment, is associated with various symptoms.
- These symptoms may include:
 - Difficulty in sleeping
 - Irritability
 - Frustration or anger
 - Anxiety
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Restlessness
 - Decreased heart rate
 - Increased appetite
 - Weight gain

What are Other Medications That can Help Me to Quit Smoking?

- There are several types of medications that can help you to quit smoking. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for more information on these medications.

Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- Before you start Varenicline, inform your doctor if you have kidney problems or a history of mood disorders (e.g. depression).
- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.

How do I Store Varenicline (Champix®)?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place not exceeding 30°C.
- Keep your medication away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor or pharmacist.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

