

# Vitamin D

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is the medication used for?

Vitamin D (also known as Cholecalciferol for Vitamin D3) is required by the body for absorption of calcium and in maintaining bone structure. It is effective for preventing osteoporosis and fractures when given together with calcium.

Vitamin D is also used to treat low calcium levels in the blood (hypocalcemia) and poor parathyroid function in chronic kidney disease (CKD). The parathyroid glands control the body's calcium levels.

Vitamin D in its active form like Calcitriol, Alfacalcidol or Paricalcitol are effective for the treatment of poor parathyroid function in CKD.

## How should I take the medication?

- Take this medication as prescribed by your healthcare professional
- Do not stop taking your medications without checking with your healthcare professional
- For Cholecalciferol and Calcitriol tablets: You may take this medication with or without food.
- For Alfacalcidol: You may take this medication with or without food.
  - For Capsules: It must be swallowed whole, unless directed otherwise
  - For Oral drops: Shake the bottle well before use and measure drops required carefully

## 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 follow when taking the medication?

Before starting on this medication, inform your healthcare professional if you:

- Are allergic to this medication, or any of the other ingredients in this medication

- Have a medical condition called Hypercalcemia where there is high calcium levels in the body
- Have a medical condition called Hypervitaminosis D where there is high vitamin D levels in the body
- Are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies

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

Common side effects include constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and weakness.

- Inform your healthcare professional if the side effects do not go away

## **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.

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

Avoid taking multivitamin supplements and aluminium containing products (e.g. found in some antacids) with this medication.

## **How should I store the 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.*

*Last updated on December 2019*