

# Tamsulosin

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

Tamsulosin belongs to a group of medications known as alpha-1 blockers. It is used to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia, a condition where the prostate gland is enlarged due to a non-cancerous growth and this is caused by overproduction of a hormone called dihydrotestosterone. The prostate is close to the bladder, therefore enlargement of the prostate gland can affect the flow of urine. This leads to urinary symptoms such as a weak or interrupted urine flow, frequent or urgent need to urinate. The medication works by relaxing the muscles of the prostate gland and bladder exit to help relieve these symptoms.

Tamsulosin can be used alone or with another medication called Dutasteride to treat enlarged prostate gland.

This medication may also be used for other conditions. Check with your healthcare professional if you are unsure why you are given this medication.

## 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.
- Do not crush or chew the tablet as this can affect the release of medication into your body.
- The first tablet of a new dose should be taken at bedtime, and subsequently at the same time each day.

For patients taking the combination medication called Duodart which contains Tamsulosin and Dutasteride:

- This medication should be swallowed whole; do not crush, chew or open the capsule as direct contact with the contents of the capsules may make your mouth or throat sore.
- This medication should not be touched or handled by pregnant women or women who are of childbearing age. The active ingredient of the medication can be absorbed through the skin, thus women should always use extra caution when they are handling the capsule. If the woman accidentally touches a leaking capsule, she should wash the

affected area immediately with soap and water as the medication may affect the fetal development negatively.

## 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. 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?

For patients taking the combination medication called Duodart which contains Tamsulosin and Dutasteride;

- Use a condom during sexual intercourse as your semen could contain the medication. If your partner is or may be pregnant, you must avoid exposing her to your semen as it may affect the normal development of the baby's sex organs.
- Avoid donating blood during treatment or for 6 months after you stopped taking the medication as the person receiving your blood transfusion may be a pregnant woman.

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- You are allergic to this medication, has sulfonamide allergy, or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- You have heart problems
- You ever feel dizzy or faint when you stand up, or if you have ever fainted after passing urine
- You are undergoing cataract (cloudiness of the lens) eye surgery. Inform your eye specialist before the operation that you are taking or have previously taken the medication. The pupil may dilate poorly and the iris (the coloured part of the eye) may become floppy during the operation. It is important for the eye specialist to be aware of this as the operation may need to be carried out differently.
- You are taking medications belonging to PDE-5 Inhibitors class such as Sildenafil, Tadalafil or Vardenafil, for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, a condition where you are unable to get or keep an erection firm enough to have sexual intercourse. You may experience dizziness or light-headedness, which may be caused by low blood pressure upon standing up quickly from a lying or sitting position. In order to reduce the likelihood that these symptoms occur, you should be on a regular daily dose of your alpha1-blocker medications (such as Tamsulosin, Alfuzosin, Terazosin) before you start medications for erectile dysfunction.

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

- Dizziness, light-headedness or fainting
  - When taking the medication for the first time, restarting treatment, or starting to take a higher dose, these side effects may occur. They may also occur when you are standing up quickly from a lying or sitting position. If you are affected by this, you should lie down until you feel better then sit for a few minutes before standing again to prevent these effects returning. These side effects usually go away and should not return once you have become used to taking your medication.
- Drowsiness
  - May affect your ability to drive and use machinery. Make sure your reactions are normal before you drive or do things require you to be alert.

For patients taking the combination medication called Duodart which contains Tamsulosin and Dutasteride: These side effects may disappear after a while if you continue to take the medication. If not, they usually go away after stopping the medication. Discuss with your doctor if you are unsure.

- Not able to get or keep an erection
- Decreased libido (sex drive); less desire to have sex
- Difficulty with ejaculation

## 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

For patients taking the combination medication called Duodart which contains Tamsulosin and Dutasteride;

- Changes in your breast tissue such as lumps, pain, enlargement or nipple discharge.

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?

Avoid drinking alcohol as it may increase the risk of dizziness, light-headedness or drowsiness.

Inform your healthcare professional if you are taking or intend to take any other medication, supplements, traditional medications or herbal remedies.

## How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

Keep this medication away from children, pregnant women and women who are of childbearing age if you are taking the combination medication called Duodart that contains Tamsulosin and Dutasteride.

## 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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