

CLOZAPINE

(Clozarol[®], Apo-Clozapine[®], Gen-Clozapine[®])

PURPOSE

Clozapine is a medication that is used to manage symptoms of psychosis such as hearing voices or strange or false beliefs or paranoia. Psychosis can be found in schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or, depression. It is often used to manage symptoms of schizophrenia or related disorders that do not respond to other medications or where the individual has had intolerable side effects to other medications.

Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder are illnesses that occur due to imbalances of certain chemicals or “messengers” in the brain. **Clozapine** works to restore the balance of certain brain chemicals.

BENEFITS FROM CLOZAPINE

The symptoms which antipsychotics have been found to help include:

- + Hallucinations (e.g. hearing voices of people who aren't there, seeing things, feeling unusual body sensations)
- + Delusions (e.g. strongly held false belief that may be of paranoid or grandiose nature)
- + Disorganized thoughts or speeded-up thoughts

Other Benefits:

- + May help you to feel calmer, less fearful and help you sleep better
- + May improve, stabilize or help settle your mood.
- + May help you to think more clearly and concentrate better on your activities

STREET DRUGS WILL DECREASE THE BENEFITS OF CLOZAPINE AND INCREASE CHANCES OF REHOSPITALIZATION

BE PATIENT – it takes a while

This medication will start to help after a few days but may take several weeks to work with the full benefit after 3 – 6 months up to a year.

Take this medication ONLY as prescribed by your doctor. DO NOT take more of it, or use it more often than recommended.

DO NOT stop this medication suddenly without consulting your doctor.

If you forget to take a dose, you should take it as soon as possible. If it is close to the time of your next dose, you should skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. DO NOT take two doses at once.

SIDE EFFECTS OF CLOZAPINE:

- ☞ Drowsiness, lethargy
- ☞ Dizziness, orthostatic hypotension (a drop in blood pressure when standing up)
- ☞ Increase in appetite and weight gain
- ☞ Drooling
- ☞ Tachycardia (increased heart rate)
- ☞ Constipation

Increases in weight, blood sugar and cholesterol can occur with antipsychotics. Occasional blood tests will be required to monitor for changes. Healthy eating and regular exercise will reduce the chance of these occurring.

Serious but rare side effects:

Rarely, Clozapine can lower white blood cells in your body which are important to prevent infection. If the number of these cells becomes too low, you may be at risk to develop serious infections. Weekly blood tests are required to make sure your white blood cells are within acceptable limits. For those who have been taking Clozapine continually for 6 months or more, blood tests may be done every two weeks.

Side effects that should be reported to your doctor promptly:

- ☞ Flu-like symptoms or fever
- ☞ Sore mouth, gum or throat
- ☞ Tachycardia (increased heart rate)
- ☞ Severe dizziness or fainting
- ☞ Difficulty urinating
- ☞ Severe constipation
- ☞ Muscle spasms, excessive rigidity
- ☞ Shaking or restlessness
- ☞ Blackouts or seizures.

PRECAUTIONS

Smoking will lower the amount of clozapine in your body and if you stop smoking clozapine levels will increase. Inform your doctor and pharmacist if you intend to stop or start smoking while on this medication.

As Clozapine may interact with other medications, you should check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medications

As Clozapine may cause drowsiness, you may wish to know how you react to this medicine before you drive, use machinery or perform other tasks that require alertness

Consult your Doctor before consuming any alcoholic beverages while on any medication Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breast-feeding before you take this medication

STORAGE OF MEDICATION

Store away from heat and direct light. Avoid storing in the bathroom medicine cabinet as the heat or moisture may cause the medication to breakdown.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

Approved by Riverview Hospital Priorities and Evaluation Committee 2006



BC Mental Health &
Addiction Services

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority