



**MEDICINE TO TREAT: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE  
ACETYLCHOLINESTERASE INHIBITORS**

Donepezil  
Rivastigmine  
Galantamine

**1. What are these medicines for?**

Donepezil, Rivastigmine and Galantamine are known as acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. These medicines are used to treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. They will help to slow down the disease from becoming worse, but will not cure the disease.

They prevent the breakdown of acetylcholine, a chemical messenger in the brain, which is important for memory and other thinking skills. This keeps the levels of acetylcholine high, even while the brain cells that produce the messenger continue to become damaged or die. They work most effectively for people who have mild to moderate levels of Alzheimer's disease.

**2. How should I take the medicines?**

- Do not stop taking your medicines without checking with your doctors
- 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 take extra medicine to make up for the missed dose.
- These medicines should be taken regularly to be effective.
- Donepezil: usually taken once a day in the evening just before bedtime. It can be taken with or after food.
- Rivastigmine and Galantamine: usually taken with meals

**3. What are the possible side effects of the medicines?**

The common side effects of these medicines include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of appetite and more frequent bowel movements. Other side-effects include headache, dizziness, feeling tired or weak and anxious. Some patients may initially feel more agitated but this should lessen after the first few weeks of starting the medicine.

#### **4. How do I know if I am allergic to these medicines?**

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medicine immediately and see your doctor.

#### **5. What precautions should I follow when taking the medicines?**

Before starting on this medicine, please inform your doctor if you have the following medical conditions:

- History of fits or seizures
- History of stomach bleeding or stomach ulcers
- Slow or irregular heart beat
- Asthma
- Difficulty passing urine
- Liver or kidney problems

These medicines may cause drowsiness. Do not drive or operate machinery if you are affected.

Do not take other medicines before discussing with your doctor or pharmacist.

It is very important that you see your doctor for regular visits. Inform your doctor if your condition has worsened or if you notice any new symptoms.

#### **6. How should I store the medicines?**

- Keep your medicines in the original container or packaging, tightly closed or sealed, in a cool and dry place away from direct sunlight.
- Keep the medicine out of reach of children.
- Throw away all expired medicines.

This leaflet answers some common questions about this medicine. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.