

Medication Information Sheet



Baclofen

brands: Lioresal®

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Baclofen is a pain and muscle medication that helps with muscle spasms, cramps and abnormally increased tone. Originally, an anti-spasticity medication, it is frequently used in headache prevention and treatment, especially when the headaches are associated with neck muscle tightness or neck pain. Baclofen is used in pill form and in liquid form for implanted spinal pumps. Baclofen works in the spinal cord and cerebellum. In the spinal cord, baclofen blocks some of the signals that go to the muscles, making the muscles contract somewhat less, relieving spasms and cramps. Baclofen also may interfere with substance P, a pain-transmitting chemical in the spinal cord.

Potential risks and side effects

Because baclofen relaxes muscles, the muscles can seem weak—including bladder muscles—because more muscle signals are blocked. If so, the dose is too high and should be reduced. Typical side effects include those listed in the disclaimer below and others: weakness, nausea, low blood pressure, urinary frequency, fatigue, incoordination, rash, itching, ankle swelling, weight gain, sweating and nasal congestion, and others. Serious side effects include imbalance, passing out, seizures, hallucinations, depression, psychiatric changes, respiratory depression and acute withdrawal if suddenly stopped. Baclofen should NOT be stopped suddenly. Baclofen may work as both a pain medication and a muscle relaxing agent.

Dosing information

Typical dosing begins very low and gradually increases. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.