

# Medication Information Sheet



## **Topiramate**

brands: Topamax®

*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**

Topiramate is a unique medication. It is FDA-approved for specific seizure disorders and for headache prevention. It is also used frequently off-label for neuropathic pain syndromes. Topamax works in distinct ways to block seizures and to block pain. One of the actions is to inhibit an enzyme called carbonic anhydrase; there is a “water-pill” effect.

### **Potential risks and side effects**

Common side effects of topiramate include tingling of the fingers or toes after taking a dose, reduced sweating, weight loss, tiredness or sleepiness and similar effects. Because the medication reduces sweating, there is greater chance of heatstroke in hot situations. A small percentage of patients may develop kidney stones; the best way to prevent this is to drink plenty of fluid. Importantly, there have been some reports of glaucoma related to the medication use. Therefore, patients must watch for any visual disturbances or changes and patients should have appropriate ophthalmological examinations. The dose is changed if there is liver or kidney disease. Topamax can decrease birth control pill effectiveness. And, no medication invented to prevent seizures should be stopped suddenly, including Topamax. There are some routine blood tests that are done occasionally while using Topamax. Topamax may work as an anti-seizure medication, a pain medication and a headache-preventing agent. All medications in this category can increase depression. All patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing practitioner know immediately of any worsening of depression.

### **Dosing information**

Topamax can be used once or twice daily. Because Topamax can affect concentration, some patients prefer a nighttime only regimen. This medication may take up to 8 weeks to reach effective dose.

### **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.