

Cabergoline

This leaflet is for patients prescribed the prolactin-blocking medication called Cabergoline for prolactinoma (tumour in the pituitary gland).

About the medication

This medicine is also supplied under the trade name Dostinex and is available as tablets containing Cabergoline 0.5mg (500 microgram).

How does it work?

Cabergoline acts on the pituitary to block the production and release of the hormone prolactin which is over-produced when a prolactinoma is present in the gland. Prolactin in the circulation is reduced to near normal levels and there may be shrinkage of the tumour itself. Treatment is therefore associated with control of symptoms and restoration of fertility where previously affected by the condition.

How do I take it?

Treatment is usually started at low dosage then increased gradually until the required regular (maintenance) dose has been reached. This reduces the likelihood of early side effects. The maintenance dose varies from patient to patient and depends upon what is required to control your symptoms. Since Cabergoline is very long acting, it usually needs to be taken on only two days of the week.

This medicine should be taken with food.

What side effects can be expected?

Nausea: it is a common problem at the outset so that it is advisable to slowly increase your dose of Cabergoline until the required maintenance dose has been reached. It is for this reason twice weekly rather than once weekly dosing is used. The following schedule is provided for your guidance.

- During the first week, take half a tablet (0.25mg or 250microgram) in the middle of a meal in the evening on one day of the week.
- During the second week, take half a tablet (0.25mg or 250microgram) in the middle of a meal in the evening on two days of the week.
- During the third week, increase the dose to one tablet, taken as above, on one day of the week.
- During the fourth and subsequent weeks, increase the dose to one whole tablet on both days of the week.
- Further dose increases (if required) can be managed using the above strategy.

Effects on blood pressure/dizziness: sudden falls in blood pressure may occur in the first few days of treatment causing dizziness especially when changing from the lying to the sitting or the sitting to the standing position. We recommend that you sit up or stand up carefully to prevent dizzy turns until you have become "used" to your medicine. This problem is unlikely to persist but may be more troublesome if you also drink alcohol.

Other side effects: headaches, abdominal discomfort, nasal congestion, constipation (and even diarrhoea) are occasionally reported by patients who take Cabergoline.

Rarely, Cabergoline can cause mood or mental health changes. It is also reported to cause impulsive control disorder, such as pathological gambling, hypersexuality, compulsive buying/shopping, and binge eating.

Other side effects are uncommon at the dose used for the treatment of prolactinoma.

If side effects persist or you feel unable to cope, contact your GP. **Do not stop taking your medicine.** It may be possible for your doctor to overcome any problems by prescribing treatment at a lower dosage.

If you have any questions about this leaflet, please contact:

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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