

Parent/Carer's Information Leaflet

Acetazolamide

(also called Diamox)

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Acetazolamide (also called Diamox)

Acetazolamide is a medicine that is sometimes used in epilepsy to control partial (focal), generalised tonic-clonic or absence seizures, fits or convulsions. It is also used to treat other conditions such as some movement disorders and raised pressure in the head. The medicine is usually only available as a tablet, containing 250mg per tablet, but a suspension can be requested from the hospital pharmacy or community pharmacist.

How do I use it?

- Acetazolamide is given either twice or three times a day at meal times.
- The tablets should be swallowed whole and may be taken with water, fruit juice or milk.
- If a dose of the medicine is forgotten and you remember up to 4 hours after missing the dose, give the forgotten dose immediately.
- If you remember only at or near the time the next dose is due, just give your child the usual dose. **Do not** give any extra Acetazolamide.
- If your child vomits within 15 mins of taking a dose of the medicine then give the dose again; if your child vomits after 15 mins of taking the dose, then **do not** give it again.

The medicine is at the correct dosage when your child is free of seizures or convulsions (fits) and has no side effects. It is never necessary to measure the level of this medicine in the blood with a blood test.

If your child has been taking Acetazolamide regularly, **do not stop it suddenly** as this could bring on a fit or convulsion.

Use with other medicines?

Most over-the-counter medicines, antibiotics and Paracetamol (Calpol) can be taken safely with Acetazolamide. **Aspirin must not be taken** with Acetazolamide. Acetazolamide can be taken safely with other anti-epileptic medicines. Acetazolamide is not thought to reduce the effectiveness of the oral contraceptive pill. Use with topiramate is not usually advised because of the risk of kidney stones. Use with phenytoin is not advised because of increased risk of osteoporosis.

Always let your Doctor or pharmacist know if starting a new medicine.

Keep a seizure diary if you can and remember to always bring all the medicines with you to clinic appointments.

What are the common side-effects?

There are only a few side-effects associated with Acetazolamide and these usually occur as the medicine is started or at high doses.

1. Occasionally the medicine may cause a tingling feeling (rather like "pins and needles") in the hands and feet. This is not usually a problem.
2. Some patients (children and adults) complain of a loss of appetite, metallic taste in the mouth or thirst and may pass urine more frequently than usual.
3. Your child may develop a headache, diarrhoea, nausea or hearing problems.
4. Occasionally the medicine may cause tiredness, irritability or confusion - this is more likely to develop at the start of treatment. If these side-effects do not go away, tell your doctor (GP or hospital doctor).
5. An allergic skin rash consisting of blistering, itching, redness, with fever and breathing difficulties may develop. This is rare but if it happens you must contact your doctor (GP or hospital) or specialist nurse immediately.
6. Very rarely the medicine may affect the bone marrow, which produces white blood cells, which fight infection, and platelets, which help the blood to clot after cuts. If your child develops frequent infections with fever, sore throat or lots of bruises (without obviously hurting themselves beforehand), must contact your doctor (GP or hospital) or specialist nurse immediately.

For further information please refer to the manufacturer's patient information leaflet.