

Flunarizine

for Migraine Prophylaxis

What is flunarizine?

Flunarizine is one of a group of medicines known as calcium channel blockers. These are most often used to reduce blood pressure or treat certain heart conditions. Flunarizine is not licensed in the UK, and so its use for preventing migraine is 'unlicensed'.

Can I get flunarizine from my local pharmacist?

No, because flunarizine is not licensed in the UK you will need to contact your hospital consultant via their secretary by email if you need a repeat prescription between clinic visits: please give us at least a week's notice and leave a contact phone number. You will need to pick the prescription up from the outpatient pharmacy at the RUH: we cannot usually deliver the medication.

How long do take flunarizine?

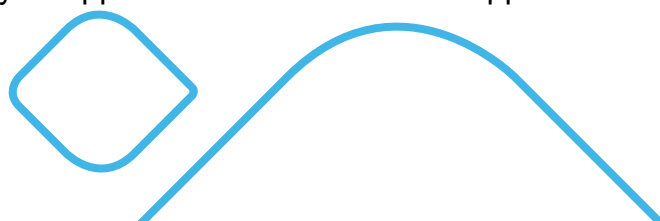
The starting dose is 5mg to be taken at night and usually increases to 10mg at night after 2 weeks.

Your tablets may not start to work for eight to twelve weeks, keep a migraine diary during this time. If the medicine is effective, you should keep taking the tablets for at least six months before discussing a trial off treatment with your doctor but may be restarted if the migraines get worse again. After flunarizine has been taken for a while, it may be recommended that people have 2 successive 'tablet-free' days each week, such as Saturday and Sunday to minimize side effects.

What are the side effects?

The main side effects of flunarizine are:

- tiredness, drowsiness in the first few weeks of treatment and usually improves after this. If you feel tired you should not drive or operate machinery. If tiredness persists, you can either try a lower dose or take flunarizine on alternate days
- weight gain, caused by an increase in appetite so be careful to stick to your usual diet.
- symptoms of depression. If you feel depressed, stop taking flunarizine. If you have not recovered within one month, you should take advice from your GP about treatment of depression
- tremors (shaking) or muscle stiffness, these usually disappear when flunarizine is stopped



Can I drink alcohol if I am taking flunarizine?

Alcohol may increase the risk of tiredness and drowsiness with flunarizine. If you do feel tired or drowsy whilst taking flunarizine, you should avoid alcoholic drinks.

Who cannot take flunarizine?

You must not take flunarizine:

- if you suffer from or have a strong family history of Parkinson's Disease
- if you have had depression
- if you have an allergy to flunarizine or other ingredients in the capsules.
- if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief overview of aspects of this treatment protocol. It is not intended as a substitute for the comprehensive 'product information' leaflet found inside all boxes of medication. The 'product information' leaflet should always be read before taking medication. **Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have**

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656 or ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net.

