

Layton Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Center

Medication Fact Sheet

Oregon Health & Science University
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503.494.6976

DONEPEZIL Hydrochloride Tablets

Trade name (Aricept®)

_____ has prescribed the following for you:

How Donepezil Works

This drug is classified as an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor. Donepezil (Aricept®) is believed to work by increasing the concentration of a brain chemical (acetylcholine) by blocking the enzyme (cholinesterase) that normally breaks it down.

Acetylcholine plays a role in memory and thinking function. By enhancing this neurochemical, donepezil, (Aricept®) may produce a modest enhancement of one's thinking ability.

While donepezil (Aricept®) may improve symptoms in persons with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease, it does not cure or stop the progressive decline seen in the course of the disease.

Dose and Treatment Information

Your health care provider will start you at donepezil (Aricept®) 5mg (white tablet) a day and then if well tolerated for 4-6 weeks, increase the dose to 10mg (yellow tablet) a day. Starting at a lower dose reduces the chance of nausea and diarrhea.

Donepezil (Aricept®) is taken once a day generally at bedtime or in the morning.

It may be taken with or without food. However, taking donepezil (Aricept®) with food reduces the chance of nausea. If a dose is missed, it can be taken as soon as possible, unless it is close to the time to take the next daily dose. Do not take a double dose on one day.

Treatment with donepezil (Aricept®) should be monitored regularly by your health care provider.

WARNINGS

If you are to have surgery, for any reason, be sure to let your physician or dentist know that you are taking this medication. Donepezil (Aricept®) can cause exaggerated muscle relaxation when combined with anesthesia drugs.

Some patients may be at risk for bradycardia, (a slow heart rate) and seizure activity.

Possible side effects

Allergic reactions
(rash, breathing difficulty)

Loss of appetite, nausea,
vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fatigue

Fainting

Sleeping difficulty

What you can do about them

Stop the medication. Call health care provider or obtain emergency assistance.

These effects are often mild and tend to occur more often when the dosage is 10mg a day rather than 5mg a day. Often, these side effects are temporary, lasting 1-3 weeks, then resolve with continued use.

Call health care provider.

Take medication in the morning. Call health care provider if it remains a problem.

If you have questions or problems, please call (503) 494-7615
between 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

For information on Alzheimer's disease contact:

- * The Layton Center for Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Research
(503-494-6976)
- * Alzheimer's Association/ Oregon and Greater Idaho Chapter
1-800-733-0402 or (503) 413-7115
- * Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center
- * Phone: 1-800-438-4380 Web address: <http://www.alzheimers.org>