

# Layton Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Center Medication Fact Sheet

## RIVASTIGMINE (Exelon®)

### HOW EXELON WORKS:

Rivastigmine (Exelon) is believed to work by increasing the concentration of a brain chemical (acetylcholine) that is involved in learning and memory.

While rivastigmine (Exelon) may improve symptoms in people with Alzheimer's disease, it does not cure or stop the progressive decline of the disease.

### DOSE AND TREATMENT INFORMATION:

You can take rivastigmine (Exelon) in a pill or as a patch applied to your skin.

If your healthcare provider orders rivastigmine (Exelon) in the patch form, you will be started on a 4.6 milligram (mg) patch. This is placed on the skin and worn for 24 hours. Then you remove it and put on a new patch.

You can put the patch on your upper or lower back, upper arm or chest. Be sure your skin is dry where you put the patch. If the medication works well, your doctor will increase the dose to 9.5 milligrams (mg).

If your healthcare provider orders rivastigmine (Exelon) as a pill, you take 1.5 milligrams (mg) twice a day with food. Your healthcare provider may increase this to a maximum dose of 6 milligrams (mg) twice a day.

If you are taking the pill form of rivastigmine (Exelon), you should take it with food to reduce the chance of nausea. If you miss a dose you can take it 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.

### WARNINGS:

\*If you are to have surgery, be sure to let your doctor or dentist know that you are taking this medication. Rivastigmine (Exelon) can cause increased muscle relaxation when combined with anesthesia drugs.

\*You may be at risk for bradycardia (a slow heart rate) and seizure activity.

\*If you're taking rivastigmine (Exelon), you should not be taking razadyne (galantamine) or donepezil (Aricept).

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS and WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THEM:**

**Allergic reactions (rash, breathing difficulty):**

Stop the medication. Call your healthcare provider or call 911.

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

These effects are often mild and tend to occur more often with higher doses.

Often, these side effects are temporary, lasting one to three weeks, and get better later. These effects may be reduced by taking the medicine with food or by eating or drinking something with ginger, such as ginger ale or ginger tea.

**Fainting:**

Call your healthcare provider.

**Sleeping difficulty:**

Take medication in the morning. Call your healthcare provider if it remains a problem.

If you have questions or problems, please call 503 494-7615 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.