

Acetazolamide Tablet (Diamox®)

What is Acetazolamide (Diamox®)?

Acetazolamide belongs to a group of medicines called carbonic anhydrase inhibitors. It increases the amount of urine you make, causing loss of salts, and excess water from your body. It is available as tablets, capsules, or solutions for injection.

It is used in glaucoma treatment or following an intravitreal injection due to an intraocular pressure spike. It is also used in other conditions: epilepsy; to remove excess fluid; altitude sickness; Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension.

Why would I need to take Acetazolamide?

In glaucoma, increased eye pressure can cause damage to the optic nerve, eye blood supply and a stroke of the eye. This can lead to progressive, irreversible sight loss. The aim of glaucoma treatment is to delay optic nerve damage and sight loss by reducing eye pressure.

Acetazolamide reduces production of fluid in the back of your eye, lowering eye pressure. Acetazolamide is often used after other medications have not worked in glaucoma. If you are on acetazolamide, you should have discussed surgery and laser with your doctor.

What do I need to know before taking Acetazolamide?

Acetazolamide is not suitable for some patients; in others extra precautions are needed. Before you start this treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside your pack.

You must NOT take acetazolamide if you have:

- Kidney or liver disease
- Metabolic acidosis
- Allergy to sulphonamides and sulphonamide derivatives
- Low blood levels of sodium and/or potassium; high chloride levels
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant
- Reduced function of adrenal glands or Addison's disease

You must consult with your doctor if you have or are:

- Breastfeeding
- Kidney stones
- Lung or any problems with breathing (COPD, chronic bronchitis, emphysema)
- Diabetes mellitus. Acetazolamide can affect blood sugar control.
- If you are taking aspirin, warfarin, blood pressure medications, steroids, metformin, gliclazide, lithium, methenamine, methotrexate, valproate, zonisamide, ciclosporin, sodium bicarbonate, digoxin, amphetamines, quinidine or medication for epilepsy

What are the potential side effects of taking acetazolamide?

Like all medications, acetazolamide can also cause unwanted side effects, though not everybody experiences them. Side effects during short-term therapy are usually not serious. For a full list, please refer to the manufacturer's printed information leaflet. ***If any of the side effects become troublesome or serious please tell your doctor or pharmacist.***

Common side effects:

- Feeling faint, tired or lightheaded - **avoid driving and using tools until you feel better**
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- Increased thirst
- Headaches
- Increased urine output
- Pain, tingling, numbness in the hands or feet
- Hearing problems or tinnitus
- Short-sightedness - **avoid driving and tell your doctor**
- Loss of appetite
- Metallic taste
- Muscle cramps or pain

Serious side effects – seek medical attention **as soon as possible** if you develop any of the following:

- Allergic reaction - sudden wheeze, difficulty in breathing, swelling of the eyelids, face or lips, rash, or itching
- Fever, chills, or other signs of infection. Acetazolamide can affect the cells in your blood causing you to be susceptible to serious infection.
- Unusual red or purple spots in your skin, bruising or bleeding, black stool, or blood in the stool
- Yellow tinge to skin or eyes, dark urine, or pale stool (signs of liver failure)
- Pain, difficulty or burning when you pass urine, pain in your lower back, blood in urine (signs of kidney failure)
- Low mood, confusion, irritability, and thoughts of harming or killing yourself
- Blistering, peeling, or loosening of the skin, including inside the mouth (Stevens-Johnson Syndrome or Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis - a rare side effect)
- Sudden blurred vision or eye pain

How can I reduce the risk of side-effects?

Gradual increases in the dose up to the desired level will help to minimize the side effects. Taking smaller, regular doses across the day can also help. If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take alongside acetazolamide.

It is advisable to make the following changes to reduce the risk of side effects:

- **Increase the intake of fluids by 2-3 times your normal daily amount.** This replaces the increased loss through the urine.
- **Eating potassium rich foods** e.g. banana, tomato, dates, black pepper, spinach, avocado, dried apricots, pomegranate, coconut water, sweet potatoes

What is my treatment regime & how do I take acetazolamide?

There is no fixed dose. Your prescriber will give you a suitable dose and this may be increased or decreased, depending on the response. The recommended dose of acetazolamide for an adult with glaucoma varies from 250-1000mg (1-4 tablets) in divided doses across 24 hours.

Acetazolamide tablets should be swallowed whole with a drink of water, just before or just after a meal. If you experience stomach upset, try taking the tablets after a meal. Do not chew or open the capsules as this will stop them from working as intended.

What if I forget a dose or take too many tablets?

If you forget to take your Acetazolamide 250mg Tablets you should take it as soon as you remember. However, if this is within two hours of your next dose you should skip the missed tablet and carry on taking the rest of your tablets as usual. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

If you take more Acetazolamide 250mg Tablets, then you should get medical help immediately. Take any remaining tablets with you so that the medical staff know exactly what you have taken.

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner. If you have further questions on this medicine, please talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

What should I do if I have a query or question about my Acetazolamide regime?

If you develop any of the symptoms featured in this leaflet, or need urgent advice about your eye(s), please telephone (in the information please provide your hospital 'X' number (if known), Name, Date of Birth and a contact telephone number):

Main telephone number: 0300 131 4500

Central Triage Nurse: Ext. 771744 during 09.00am and 17.00pm.

For Out of Hours contact you may leave an answerphone message on the telephone numbers above, and a member of staff will contact you the next working day. Otherwise, if you feel you need to be seen urgently, please ring the Main hospital number and ask for the On-Call Ophthalmology Doctor.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

References

Acetazolamide 250mg Tablets for Glaucoma – Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) – (eMC) 2023 Acetazolamide 250mg Tablets – Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) – (eMC)[ONLINE] <https://patient.info/medicine/acetazolamide-for-glaucoma-diamox-2>

Manufacturer's PIL, Acetazolamide Tablets 250 mg; ADVANZPharma (formerly Concordia International), The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated December 2019.

Manufacturer's PIL, Diamox®SR250 mg Capsules; ADVANZPharma (formerly Concordia International), The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated June 2019.

Medicines Complete BNF86th Edition; British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

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