



Saint Mary's Managed Clinical Service
Division of Gynaecology

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

MEDICATION FOR OVERACTIVE BLADDER

WHAT IS OVERACTIVE BLADDER (OAB)?

Overactive bladder (OAB) is a condition that causes you to need to pass urine more often than normal during the daytime and, sometimes, during the night too. When your bladder gives you the signal to pass urine, you may need to rush to get there and not be able to put off going to the toilet. This is called urgency.

Sometimes, the need to pass urine comes on very suddenly and the urine starts to come out before you are ready. This can cause you to leak urine and is known as urge incontinence.

Sometimes your bladder constantly gives you signals that you need to pass urine so you never feel properly empty.

Your doctor or nurse has recommended that you try medication to help manage your overactive bladder symptoms.

WHAT MEDICATION IS AVAILABLE FOR OVERACTIVE BLADDER?

There are two types of medication available for overactive bladder. The first are tablets called "antimuscarinics" or "anticholinergics".

Examples of these are:

- Solifenacin
- Oxybutinin
- Trospium
- Tolterodine
- Propiverine
- Darifenacin
- Fesoterodine

The second type of medication is called a Beta-3 agonist and this tablet is called Mirabegron (Betmiga).

HOW WILL MEDICATION HELP MY OVERACTIVE BLADDER SYMPTOMS?

These tablets help to keep the bladder muscle relaxed while the bladder fills up. This allows the bladder to hold more urine between visits to the toilet.

If the tablets help, you should be able to go to the toilet less often during the day and night. You should get more warning that you are going to need to pass urine and not have to rush. If you have urge incontinence, this should also improve.

HOW SOON WILL I SEE RESULTS?

The tablets do not work immediately. You should start to notice some gradual improvement within a few weeks of starting the tablets.

By the time you have taken them for 6 weeks, you should be noticing a real difference in your symptoms. Your bladder may not be working perfectly however and may need some further retraining to maximize the results (your nurse will discuss this with you at your appointment).

If the medication does not work at all (after 6 weeks) or you have intolerable side effects, then please contact the clinic or your GP so that an alternative medication can be prescribed.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO TAKE THE TABLETS FOR?

When you are getting to the end of your supply of tablets, ask your GP for another prescription. It may help them to know that the tablets are working so they know to give you a longer prescription.

Sometimes your bladder may improve after a few months' treatment, enabling you to come off the medication. However, many people do have to stay on the medication for longer to control their symptoms.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Unfortunately, all tablets can have side-effects and tablets for overactive bladder are no exception. Some of the possible side effects are listed below however, it is important that you read the information leaflet inside your tablet packet for a full list of possible side effects.

Antimuscarinic/anticholinergic side effects:

The most common side effects are:

Dry mouth: If your mouth becomes dry, you might find sucking a mint or a sugar-free sweet helpful. If you take your tablet once a day, taking it before you go to bed (rather than in the morning) can also help. You could ask the chemist about special chewing gum to help a dry mouth. Your GP may be able to prescribe you an artificial saliva spray if you are having lots of problems with dry mouth. This can be very helpful.

Constipation: Constipation can be helped by eating plenty of roughage/fibre. A large spoonful of Flaxseed taken with breakfast every day can also be helpful.

Other side-effects are less common:

Eye problems: Occasionally the tablets relax the muscles in the eye as well as the bladder muscle. This can make your vision blurred, which can cause you to worry that there is something wrong with your eyes. The effect wears off quickly if you stop the tablets and doesn't cause any lasting damage to your eyes. If your vision changes on the tablets, you should stop them and see an optician to make sure there is nothing else causing the problem.

Other: Occasionally, the tablets can cause dizziness, drowsiness or memory problems. If you have any of these problems whilst taking the tablets, you should arrange to see your GP or the doctor in the clinic.

Mirabegron (Betmiga) side effects:

The most common side effects are:

Increased heart rate: If your heart beat becomes faster than normal or if you become aware of your heart beat (palpitations) you will need to see your GP who may advise you to stop the medication.

Urinary tract infection: Bladder infections (cystitis) are an uncommon side effect of this medication and can usually be treated easily.

Other: Occasionally, the tablets can cause indigestion, vaginal itching or high blood pressure. If you have concerns about any of these or develop any new symptoms soon after starting your medication, you should discuss this with your doctor.

If you require any further information or clarification, including clarification of terminology, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the doctors or nurses, who will be happy to discuss your concerns with you.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you require any further information, please contact the Warrell Unit:



Warrell Unit:

(0161) 701 4455 (Choose option 3 "Urogynaecology") – 08:30-16:00



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