Information on PIRENZEPINE for Service Users and their Families

This leaflet provides general information about your medication. Manufacturer patient information leaflets are also provided with all medicines. If you require further information, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Pirenzepine is also known as Gastrozepin®. It is available as tablets called Gastrozepin®.

Pirenzepine is pronounced

_Pee-renz-e-pin_

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The Mersey Care Medicines Information Service\(^1\) regularly updates this information sheet.

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\(^1\) Medicines Information, Pharmacy, Mossley Hill Hospital, Park Avenue, Liverpool L18 8BU
**What is Pirenzepine for?**

Pirenzepine is part of a group of medicines called ‘antimuscarinic agents’. It is medicine which is used to help control drooling or dribbling excess saliva (hypersalivation) caused by antipsychotic medications especially clozapine. Pirenzepine is not licenced for use in the UK but mental health experts know that the medicine works well for hypersalivation. Supplies of this medication are imported into the country for named patients. Pirenzepine was used more commonly to promote healing of stomach and intestinal ulcers.

**How should I take Pirenzepine?**

Before taking any pirenzepine, tell your doctor if:

- you are allergic or intolerant to pirenzepine and its ingredients
- you suffer prostate problems or glaucoma or heart conditions, problems with your kidneys, stomach or bowel problems and urinary problems
- you are taking any other medicines
- you are pregnant or planning pregnancy or breast-feeding

Your doctor will decide how much pirenzepine is right for you to take. Pirenzepine tablets should be swallowed whole with water, about half an hour before a meal. Ask your pharmacist or nurse if you are not sure of anything.

**Can I stop taking Pirenzepine if I feel better?**

Pirenzepine helps prevent excess saliva caused by taking antipsychotic medication; so you will need to continue taking it while you are taking antipsychotic medication. It is better to discuss with your doctor how long you will need to be on this medication. If you want to stop your medication, discuss this with your doctor.

**What if I forget a dose of Pirenzepine?**

If you forget to take a dose of pirenzepine tablets, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at the usual time, then continue your course as before. Do not double the dose or take extra doses to make up.
When will Pirenzepine start to work?
You may start to feel better in a short time but it can take several days or weeks before you notice the full benefits of this medicine.

Are there any side effects?
Pirenzepine may cause side effects in some people, but these may vary from person to person. Many side effects wear off over time. Known side effects are:
- dry mouth and bad breath
- dizziness and light-headedness
- changes in appetite
- bloating, constipation or diarrhoea
- headaches
- sweating

Occasionally, more serious side effects can occur, such as:
- allergic reaction (rash, severe itching, difficulty breathing)
- problems with eyesight
- difficulty passing water (urinating)
- fast heart beat
- confusion and disorientation

If you are concerned about any other side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. If you think a medicine has caused you an unwanted side effect, please report the problem either on a Yellow Card form available from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist OR online at this website [http://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/](http://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/).

Can I take other medicines?
Other medicines, including medicines bought over the counter without prescription, may interact with pirenzepine causing unwanted effects. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines.
Can I drive?

Pirenzepine can cause drowsiness, eyesight problems (blurring) and dizziness, all of which can interfere with performing of tasks requiring alertness. If you are affected in this way, do not drive or work with machinery.

Can I drink alcohol?

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication. The combined effects of alcohol and pirenzepine can cause undesirable effects.

Can I get pregnant or breast-feed?

Medicines can have harmful effects at any time during pregnancy. If you are pregnant, or are planning to get pregnant, you should seek advice from your doctor. You and your doctor or specialist will decide if the potential benefits of treatment outweigh the potential risks to the baby.

Pirenzepine may pass into breast milk. It may also affect milk production. If you are breast feeding, you should get your doctor’s advice.

What alternative treatments are there?

Another drug used for drooling (hypersalivation) is hyoscine. Other management strategies such as chewing gum or sucking sugarless sweets to increase frequency of swallowing can also be tried.

IMPORTANT

Remember to keep medicines where children cannot see or reach them. Never share medicines with others even if their symptoms appear the same as yours.

NEVER EXCEED THE STATED DOSE OF YOUR MEDICATION