Information on MEMANTINE 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.

Memantine is known by the brand name Ebixa®. Other memantine products are also available. It comes as:

- Oral tablets – Ebixa® tablets and other brands
- Oral solution - Ebixa® oral solution

Memantine is pronounced

*Meh – man - teen*

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The Mersey Care Medicines Information Service¹ regularly updates this information sheet.

¹ Medicines Information, Pharmacy, Mossley Hill Hospital, Park Avenue, Liverpool L18 8BU
What is Memantine used for?
Memantine is a medicine used to treat symptoms of moderate to severe dementia in people with Alzheimer’s disease and other similar conditions. Symptoms of dementia commonly include increasing loss of memory, confusion, changes in behaviour, mood and personality, and difficulties in carrying out normal daily and social activities. Memantine works through a brain substance called NMDA which is involved in brain and memory function. This can help improve learning of new information, memory and general functioning in people with symptoms of dementia.

How should I take Memantine?
Before taking any memantine, tell your doctor if:

- you are allergic to memantine, or any of its ingredients
- you have epilepsy (fits) or have suffered from fits or if you are more likely to suffer from fits
- have recently had a heart attack, or have heart failure or uncontrolled high blood pressure
- history of kidney disease
- you are taking any other prescribed medicines
- you are taking any medicines that you have bought yourself, including any herbal or other complementary medicines.
- you are pregnant (or planning pregnancy) or breast-feeding

Your doctor will decide how much memantine is right for you to take. Do not change the dose yourself without your doctor’s advice. Memantine is usually started at a lower dose and adjusted to a dose that meets your needs. If you are taking tablets, swallow them whole with a drink of water at the same time each day. You may take memantine tablets with or without food. Memantine oral solution should be taken once daily at the same time each day. The solution must not be poured or pumped into the mouth directly from the bottle or the pump, but the correct amount should be put onto a spoon or into a glass of water using the pump. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are not sure of anything.

Can I stop taking Memantine if I feel better?
Your doctor will advise you about how long you should carry on taking memantine. Do not stop taking the tablets unless told to do so by your doctor. If you stop taking memantine when it’s still working for you, the benefits of your treatment will gradually fade away and your symptoms may return.
What if I forget a dose of Memantine?
If you forget the tablets, take the missed dose as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the forgotten dose completely 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. If you forget to take your medicine for more than a few days, call your doctor before taking any more medicine. Your carer may be able to help you to take your medicine as prescribed.

When will Memantine start to work?
Memantine does not work straight away. It may take several days or even weeks for benefits to show. Memory and other brain functions may slowly improve over several weeks. In some people, symptoms may not improve but progress of the disease may be slowed down.

Are there any side effects?
Memantine may cause side effects in some people, but they may vary from person to person. Many side effects wear off over time.

- headache
- dizziness
- sleepiness
- tiredness
- high blood pressure
- problems with balance
- feeling sick
- difficulty sleeping
- confusion
- hallucinations
- constipation
- feeling short of breath

You must tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of these serious side effects, which may need urgent medical attention.

- heart problems
- liver function problems
- seizures (fits)
- blood clots
- allergic rash, itch, swelling, difficulty breathing
- low mood with thoughts of suicide
- seeing, feeling or hearing things that are not there

You should also tell your doctor if you notice any other side effects not listed in this leaflet.
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?
You should always tell the doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you are taking or have recently taken, or are going to be taking any other medicines including those bought without prescription because other medicines may interact with memantine causing unwanted effects. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines.

Can I drive?
Memantine can change your reaction time and cause dizziness and tiredness which can affect your ability to drive. If you are affected in this way, you must not drive until your doctor tells you that it is safe to do so. By law, you may commit an offence if you drive when your condition or treatment affects your ability to drive safely. Talk to your doctor or contact the DVLA if you are not sure.

Can I drink alcohol?
Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication. Alcohol can worsen the symptoms of dementia.

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 or specialist. You and your doctor or specialist will decide if the potential benefits of treatment outweigh the potential risks to the baby. Memantine should not be used while breastfeeding. If you are breast feeding, you should get your doctor’s advice.

What alternative treatments are there?
Memantine is used to manage symptoms of dementia in people with Alzheimer’s disease and other similar conditions. Other medicines used for dementia are donepezil, galantamine, and rivastigmine. Your doctor or pharmacist will be able to provide you with further information about these medications. In addition to medication, non-drug measures such as psychological, relaxation and other complementary and alternative therapies can sometimes help.

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.

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