Information on QUETIAPINE
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.

Quetiapine is available as:
- regular tablets called Seroquel® or just quetiapine tablets
- prolonged release tablets called Seroquel® XL or many other generic brands

Quetiapine is pronounced:

*Kwe-tie-a-peen*

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

\(^1\) Medicines Information, Pharmacy, Mossley Hill Hospital, Park Avenue, Liverpool L18 8BU
What is Quetiapine for?
Quetiapine is part of a group of medications called atypical antipsychotics which are used to treat symptoms such as hearing voices, seeing, feeling or sensing things that are not there, unpleasant thoughts, feeling paranoid, feeling that other people can read your thoughts, being withdrawn or lacking in motivation. Quetiapine can also be used to treat people with a bipolar mood disorder when they feel excessively high or over excited (mania) or when they feel low. Sometimes a specialist may add quetiapine to your medication for depression to help manage your symptoms.

How should I take Quetiapine?
Before taking quetiapine, tell your doctor if:
- you are allergic to quetiapine or to any excipients (e.g., lactose)
- you have heart, liver or severe kidney problems; seizures (fits), diabetes, dementia, blood disorders, blood pressure
- you have a history of stroke, blood clots, thyroid disorders
- you have a thyroid disorder
- you are taking ANY other medicines (particularly antibiotics) including those you have bought yourself without prescription
- you are pregnant (or planning pregnancy) or breast-feeding

Your doctor will decide how much quetiapine is right for you to take. Follow this advice carefully. Quetiapine tablets are usually taken twice a day with or without food. Prolonged release tablets are usually given once a day. Tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water. Never exceed the stated dose.

Do I need any test before starting taking Quetiapine?
Your doctor may carry out some blood and urine tests and monitor your height, weight, blood pressure and pulse. You may also get a heart tracing or electrocardiogram (ECG) done to check how well your heart is working. These tests will allow the doctor to check if this medication is right for you and to monitor your treatment.

Can I stop taking my medication if I feel better?
Quetiapine helps prevent your symptoms from returning (relapse) so it is best to continue taking it. People who take this type of medication regularly are less likely to deteriorate or have to go into hospital with severe symptoms. It is better to discuss with your doctor how long you will need to be on medication. Antipsychotic medication tends to be taken long term. If you want to stop your medication it is better to do it in discussion with your doctor, and to stop slowly so that you can be monitored for any unpleasant withdrawal effects.
**What if I forget a dose of Quetiapine?**
Take the missed dose as soon as possible. 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 Quetiapine start to work?**
You may start to feel better in a short time but it can take several weeks of treatment or longer for the benefits of this medicine to become noticeable.

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

Known side effects include:
- drowsiness
- stomach problems
- feeling or being sick
- dry mouth
- constipation
- high blood sugar
- headaches
- abnormal dreams and nightmares
- feeling dizzy or faint
- sexual problems
- light-headedness
- increased appetite
- weight gain
- high cholesterol
- blurred eyesight

Occasionally, more serious side effects can occur. These include:
- allergic reaction - itching, rash, swelling and breathing problems
- marked drowsiness
- muscle stiffness
- faster breathing
- fits
- movement problems
- distressing thoughts of harming or killing yourself
- strokes in older people with dementia
- slow, fast or odd or pounding heart beats
- high fever, stiffness, sweating, loss of consciousness – ‘NMS’

If you suffer these or 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 and grapefruit juice may interact with quetiapine causing unwanted effects. Medicines you can buy over the counter without a prescription may interact with prescribed medicines. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist before taking other medicines.

Can I drive?
Quetiapine can make you feel drowsy and effect your concentration and alertness and your eyesight. If you are affected in this way, do not drive or work machinery. 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 DVLA if you are not sure.

Can I drink alcohol?
Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication. The combined effects of quetiapine and alcohol can make you feel more sleepy.

Can I get pregnant or breast feed?
Medicines can have harmful effects at any time during pregnancy. Newborns whose mothers were treated with antipsychotics during pregnancy can show unusual movements and withdrawal side effects. 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.

Quetiapine can pass into breast milk. If you are breast feeding, you should get your doctor’s advice.

What alternative treatments are there?
Quetiapine is an antipsychotic medication. Other antipsychotics with similar effects include amisulpride, aripiprazole, clozapine, olanzapine and risperidone. Other antipsychotics such as sulpiride, haloperidol, flupentixol and zuclopenthixol can also be used. Your doctor or pharmacist will be able to provide you with further information about these medications.

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 MEDICINE.