Co-cyprindiol tablets (Clairette, Dianette)

Co-cyprindiol tablets are prescribed for women with certain skin conditions when contraception is also required.

Carefully read and follow the printed information leaflet from inside the pack.

About co-cyprindiol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>A hormone treatment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>Severe acne or hirsutism in women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Clairette®, Dianette®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Tablets</td>
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Co-cyprindiol is prescribed for two different skin conditions in women - acne and hirsutism.

Acne is a common skin condition which is often treated by skin creams or antibiotic tablets. You will have been prescribed co-cyprindiol for acne if other treatments have not been sufficiently effective for you.

Hirsutism is a condition where dark, thick hair grows in places where it doesn't usually grow in women, such as on the face or chest.

Co-cyprindiol contains two ingredients, ethinylestradiol and cyproterone. Ethinylestradiol is an oestrogen, which is a female sex hormone. Cyproterone is an anti-androgen. Androgens are responsible for stimulating the glands on your skin which produce an oil (sebum) and they also encourage hair growth. Co-cyprindiol works by reducing the amount of androgen you produce, which helps to clear acne and reduces excess hair growth.

Co-cyprindiol is also an oral contraceptive pill. Although it is not prescribed solely for this purpose, it can be helpful if you have one of the skin conditions mentioned above and also wish to take oral contraception.

Before taking co-cyprindiol

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine can only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking co-cyprindiol it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are breast-feeding, or if you think you could be pregnant.
- If you have ever had an unwanted blood clot, or blood vessel problems.
- If you have a breast lump, or if you have had breast cancer.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or if you have gallstones.
- If you have any vaginal bleeding other than your normal monthly period.
- If you have high blood levels of fats (lipids), or if you have been told you have high blood levels of prolactin.
- If you have any of the following conditions: heart disease, migraine, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), porphyria, sickle cell disease, or an inflammatory bowel condition.
- If you have ever been diagnosed with depression, or if you have had a transient ischaemic attack (called a 'TIA' or 'mini-stroke'), or if you have had haemolytic uraemic syndrome.
- If during a pregnancy you have had problems such as severe itching and blistering of your skin, jaundice, or any involuntary jerky movements.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking any other medicines, including those available to buy without a prescription, herbal and complementary medicines. This is important because some medicines may stop combined hormonal contraceptives from working properly.

**How to take co-cyprindiol**

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about co-cyprindiol, and it will also provide you with a full list of side-effects which you could experience from taking it.
- Starting on the first day of your next period, take one tablet daily for 21 days and then have 7 days without taking a tablet. Continue to take one tablet daily for 21 days and then have 7 pill-free days until your doctor tells you otherwise.
- You should take your tablets at the same time of day each day. This is particularly important if you are taking them to prevent pregnancy. If you forget to take a tablet on time, take it as soon as you remember, and then take the next dose at your usual time (even if this means taking two tablets on the same day). If you are more than 12 hours late taking a tablet, your protection against pregnancy could be reduced. In this case, for the following seven days you must either use a barrier method of contraception such as a condom, or avoid sex. If these seven days run beyond the end of your packet of pills, start the next packet straightaway without any tablet-free days. This means you may not have a period until the end of the two packets.

**Getting the most from your treatment**

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor or clinic. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. You will need to have your blood pressure checked from time to time.
- If you suspect at any time that you may be pregnant, stop taking co-cyprindiol and see your doctor or pharmacist for a pregnancy test straightaway.
- **Important**: if you have a bout of being sick (vomiting) or diarrhoea, it can reduce the effectiveness of the contraception. If this happens, use a condom if you have sex during the illness and for seven days after you recover. If the illness occurs during the last week of your tablets, miss out the seven pill-free days and start a new pack of tablets straightaway. This means you may not have a period until the end of the two packets.
- Please note: co-cyprindiol taken as a contraceptive will not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases or HIV infection. If you are concerned about either of these, please ask your pharmacist or doctor for advice on safe sex.
- There is a slightly increased risk of a clot in a blood vessel (thromboembolism) with hormonal contraceptives like co-cyprindiol, particularly during the first year of use. Travelling that involves long periods of sitting still (for example, flying for more than three hours) can add to the risk of a blood clot. It's always a good idea to exercise your feet and ankles regularly while travelling, and you may wish to consider wearing flight socks during long flights.
- Taking hormonal contraception can increase the risk of some types of cancer. Research suggests a small increased risk of breast and cervical cancer in women taking co-cyprindiol. Your doctor will be able to discuss the risks of this with you.
- Before having any kind of surgery, you must tell your doctor or surgeon that you are taking these tablets. This is because your doctor may decide that you need to stop the treatment for a period of time to reduce your risk of unwanted blood clots.
- It is likely to take at least 3-4 months for your skin condition to clear up. Your doctor will regularly review your progress during this time. If you still need contraception once the course of treatment with co-cyprindiol has stopped, an alternative contraceptive pill will be prescribed for you.
Can co-cyprindiol cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the common ones associated with co-cyprindiol. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with the tablets. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

### Common co-cyprindiol side-effects (these affect less than 1 in 10 women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side-effect</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling sick, tummy (abdominal) pain</td>
<td>Eat simple meals - avoid rich and spicy food (see also the information above on bouts of sickness)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headache continues or is sudden and severe, contact your doctor for advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breast tenderness, increased weight, mood changes</td>
<td>If troublesome, speak with your doctor</td>
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**Important**: co-cyprindiol can have some serious side-effects, but these are very uncommon. If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop taking the tablets and contact your doctor for advice straightaway:

- Any sudden or severe chest pain.
- Any sudden breathlessness or if you cough up any blood.
- Any swelling or pain in a leg.
- Severe stomach pain
- An unusually painful or severe headache, or any loss of your sight or hearing, or any difficulty swallowing.
- A bad fainting attack, a fit, or any numbness on one side of your body,
- Any yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes (jaundice).

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

### How to store co-cyprindiol

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

### Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you buy any medicines, always check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine, please ask your pharmacist for advice.
Further reading & references


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