Co-phenotrope tablets for diarrhoea

The usual dose for acute diarrhoea in an adult is four tablets to start with, followed by two tablets every six hours until the diarrhoea is controlled. Do not take more than 10 tablets in 24 hours.

When you have diarrhoea it is important that you have lots of water to drink to prevent you from becoming lacking in fluid in the body (dehydrated). Eat as normally as possible, as soon as you feel able.

If your symptoms continue for more than 48 hours, speak with a doctor for advice if you have not already done so.

Co-phenotrope must not be taken by children under 16 years of age unless prescribed by a doctor.

About co-phenotrope

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>An antimotility medicine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>Diarrhoea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Diphenoxylate hydrochloride with atropine sulfate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Tablets</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Co-phenotrope is used in acute diarrhoea (this is diarrhoea which starts suddenly and lasts less than two weeks). It contains two ingredients: diphenoxylate hydrochloride and atropine sulfate. It is the diphenoxylate hydrochloride which is the main ingredient.

The most common cause of acute diarrhoea is infection. Other causes include drinking lots of beer, as a side-effect from other medicines, and anxiety. In most cases the diarrhoea settles within a few days, although it may take longer in some people. The main treatment is to have lots to drink to prevent lack of fluid in the body (dehydration). Antidiarrhoeal medicines like co-phenotrope may not be necessary; however, if you wish to reduce the number of trips that you need to make to the toilet, it can be useful. Most people only need to take it for a few days.

Diphenoxylate works by slowing down the activity of your bowel. This reduces the speed at which the contents pass through, and so food remains in your intestines for longer. This allows more water to be absorbed back into your body and results in firmer stools that are passed less often.

You can buy co-phenotrope tablets from your local pharmacy, or get them on prescription from your doctor. They are not suitable for children under the age of 16 years unless they have been prescribed by a doctor.

Because co-phenotrope regulates the passage of food through the digestive system, the tablets are also prescribed to help people regulate their bowel activity following surgery on the intestines.
Before taking co-phenotrope

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

- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or the way your kidneys work.
- If you have any breathing problems, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- If you have prostate problems or any difficulties passing urine.
- If you have been told you have low blood pressure.
- If you have any problems with your thyroid or adrenal glands.
- If you have epilepsy.
- If you have a problem in your bile duct.
- If you have a bowel obstruction or an inflammatory bowel problem.
- If you have a condition causing muscle weakness, called myasthenia gravis.
- If you have ever had a drug addiction.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to take co-phenotrope

- Before you start this treatment, read the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet from inside your pack. The manufacturer’s leaflet will give you more information about the tablets and a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking them.
- Start by taking four tablets, and then take a further two tablets every six hours until the diarrhoea is controlled. Do not take more than 10 tablets in 24 hours.
- Co-phenotrope should not be taken by a child under 16 years of age unless it is on the advice of a doctor. If your child has been prescribed co-phenotrope, check the label carefully to make sure you know what dose to give, as the dose will depend upon your child’s age.
- If you forget to take a dose, do not worry, just take a dose after the next time you pass some diarrhoea. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- It is important that you have lots to drink to prevent you from becoming lacking in fluid in the body (dehydrated). Drinking plain water is ideal, but juice and/or soup are also suitable. Try to avoid drinks that contain a lot of sugar, such as cola or pop, as they can sometimes make diarrhoea worse.
- Oral rehydration salts can be taken to help prevent dehydration and replace lost salts. These are especially recommended for children and for people who are frail or who have underlying health problems. You can buy these from a pharmacy.
- Eat small, light meals as soon as you are able. Plain foods such as wholemeal bread and rice are good foods to try eating first.
- If your symptoms continue for more than 48 hours, speak with a doctor or pharmacist for advice if you have not already done so.
- If your symptoms get worse, or if you develop a high temperature, or if you pass blood in the diarrhoea, you should ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice as soon as possible.
- If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with co-phenotrope. This is because the risk of side-effects can be increased when co-phenotrope tablets are taken with some other medicines.
- Do not take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that someone has taken an overdose of this medicine, or that a child has taken it by accident, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital straightaway. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.
Can co-phenotrope 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 most common ones associated with co-phenotrope. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-phenotrope side-effects</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tired, sleepy or dizzy</td>
<td>If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you feel better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, let your doctor know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tummy (abdominal) discomfort, feeling sick (nausea)</td>
<td>Try taking the tablets after eating some food if you are not already doing so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Stop taking co-phenotrope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confused or restless, mood changes, high temperature (fever), dry mouth, difficulty passing urine, feeling flushed</td>
<td>These should soon pass. If any become troublesome, stop taking co-phenotrope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

How to store co-phenotrope

- 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

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

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

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 ask your pharmacist.

Further reading & references

- Manufacturer's PIL, Co-phenotrope 2.5 mg/0.025 mg Tablets; Concordia International (formerly AMCo), The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2012.

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