Lofepramine for depression

Keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.

Lofepramine can make you feel sleepy. Do not drive and do not or use tools or machines while affected. Do not drink alcohol.
Tell your doctor if you experience any troublesome side-effects.

About lofepramine

Lofepramine belongs to a group of medicines called tricyclic antidepressants. It is prescribed for the treatment of depression.

The exact cause of depression is not known. It can develop for no apparent reason or it may be triggered by a life event such as a relationship problem, bereavement, or illness. People with depression have a consistently low mood and other symptoms severe enough to interfere with normal day-to-day activities. Medicines like lofepramine can help to ease the symptoms caused by depression. Lofepramine is thought to work by interfering with certain brain chemicals (called neurotransmitters) which may be involved in causing the symptoms of depression.

Before taking lofepramine

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 lofepramine it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- If you have any of the following conditions: epilepsy, sugar diabetes, increased pressure in your eye (glaucoma), or an overactive thyroid gland.
- If you have had problems with constipation.
- If you have any difficulties passing urine, or if you have had prostate trouble.
- If you have a heart or blood vessel disorder, or an unusual heart rhythm.
- If you have ever had any of the following mental health problems: mania, bipolar disorder, or psychosis.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or if you have any problems with the way your kidneys work.
- If you have either of the following rare conditions: a tumour on your adrenal gland, called a phaeochromocytoma, or an inherited blood disorder called porphyria.
If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines. It is especially important that you tell your doctor if you have recently taken a medicine for depression, known as a monoamine-oxidase inhibitor (MAOI).

If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take lofepramine

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about lofepramine and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience from taking it.
- Take lofepramine exactly as your doctor tells you to. It is usual to take one 70 mg tablet (or 5 ml of the 70 mg/5 ml medicine), two or three times a day. Your doctor will tell you which dose is right for you, and the directions will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you about what the doctor said to you. Lofepramine can cause drowsiness so your doctor may advise you to take a smaller dose to begin with, and then to increase it gradually as your body gets used to the medicine.
- You can take lofepramine either with or without food. Swallow the tablet with a drink of water.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember (unless it is nearly time for your next dose, in which case leave out the missed dose and take the next dose as normal). Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- When you start taking lofepramine, you may feel that it is not working for you straightaway. It can take a week or two after starting it before the effect begins to build up, and several weeks before you feel the full benefit. It is important that you do not stop taking it thinking it is not helping.
- While you feel depressed, you may have distressing thoughts and think about harming yourself or ending your life. If this happens, it is very important that you tell your doctor about it straightaway.
- Your doctor will recommend that you do not drink alcohol while you are on lofepramine. This is because it increases the risk of side-effects, such as feeling sleepy.
- There are several types of antidepressants. Each type works in a slightly different way and can have different side-effects. If you find that lofepramine does not suit you then let your doctor know, as another may be found that does.
- A few people who take lofepramine find that their skin becomes more sensitive to sunlight than normal. Try to avoid strong sunlight until you know how your skin reacts, or use a sun cream with a high sun protection factor. Do not use sunbeds.
- If you buy any medicines 'over the counter', check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with lofepramine. This is because a number of medicines can increase the risk of side-effects from lofepramine, including some strong painkillers, flu remedies and antihistamines which can be bought from pharmacies.
- If you have diabetes you may need to check your blood sugar (glucose) more frequently. This is because lofepramine may affect the levels of sugar in your blood. Your doctor will advise you about this.
- If you are due to have an operation or any medical treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment that you are taking lofepramine, as it can interfere with some anaesthetics.
- If you suspect that someone (especially if it is a child) might have taken lofepramine by accident, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital straightaway. This is very important because lofepramine can cause serious problems when it is taken accidentally or in overdose. Take the container with you to show what has been taken, even if the pack is now empty.
- Your doctor will ask you to carry on taking lofepramine even after you feel better. This is to help stop your depression from returning. It is normal for a course of treatment to last for around six months after your symptoms have eased.
- Continue to take lofepramine unless your doctor tells you otherwise. Stopping treatment suddenly can sometimes cause problems and your doctor will want you to reduce your dose gradually over a number of weeks when this becomes necessary.
Can lofepramine 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 more common ones associated with lofepramine. The best place to find a full list of the side-effects which can be associated with your medicine, is from the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet supplied with the medicine. Alternatively, you can find an example of a manufacturer’s information leaflet in the reference section below. Speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common lofepramine side-effects</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling dizzy or faint</td>
<td>Getting up more slowly may help. If you begin to feel faint, sit down until the feeling passes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td>Try chewing sugar-free gum, or sucking sugar-free sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Try to eat a well-balanced diet containing plenty of fibre and drink several glasses of water each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling sleepy or tired, blurred vision</td>
<td>Do not drive and do not use tools or machines while affected. Do not drink alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating, feeling anxious or confused, tingling or numb feelings, breast tenderness, difficulties with sexual function, increased appetite, difficulty passing urine, feeling sick, a fast heartbeat, feeling shaky, rash, headache, disturbed sleep</td>
<td>Speak with your doctor if any of these become troublesome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

How to store lofepramine

- 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 taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital at once. 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.

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


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