

Patient information

Amiodarone

The information in this leaflet is intended for general guidance. If your doctor has given you different advice, follow their instructions.

Your GP may give you the same tablets known by a different name (the brand name). You should always check with your GP or pharmacist if you are unsure.

What is Amiodarone used for and how does it work?

Amiodarone is used primarily to regulate your heart rate and rhythm. When the heart beats and contracts, the heart muscle cells should beat and contract in an organised manner. If this rhythm becomes disturbed or irregular, the heart function may become compromised or impaired.

Amiodarone acts by reducing the tendency of the heart muscle cells to contract in an irregular manner thus regulating the heart rhythm. Please ask your doctor or nurse if you wish to know which irregular rhythms you are taking amiodarone for.

Most common side effects

- low heart rate
- sleep disturbances
- taste disturbances
- tremor

Your skin is more likely to burn in the sun so you will need to use extra protection, (eg full sun block) and wear protective clothing such as a hat and sunglasses. Where possible avoid the midday sun.

There are other common side effects which may affect your liver, thyroid gland, lungs or eyes. Please contact your doctor if you experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, light-headedness, palpitations, fainting, unusual tiredness or

chest pain. Please also report any yellow discolouration of the skin or eyes to your doctor.

If you are concerned please contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

What if I miss a dose?

If you are taking your amiodarone as a once a day prescription—you can take it late in the day. If you forget completely carry on with your usual dose the next day. DO NOT take a double dose. If you are taking it two or three times a day, do not take the dose you missed and carry on to your next usual dose.

General points

- When first starting amiodarone you might be required to take a loading dose (a larger and/or more frequent dosage which may take up to two weeks) as it takes some time for the desired drug actions to take effect. Eventually you will only be taking the medication once a day.
- Amiodarone may increase the anticoagulation effect of Warfarin. Your Warfarin dose and/or monitoring may require alterations accordingly. Please inform your anticoagulation service if you are started on Warfarin.
- Other medications can be affected by amiodarone. Please highlight to your doctor or pharmacist that you are taking this medication.
- You might experience some difficulties with night driving—headlights may dazzle your vision while driving at night.
- Alcohol can affect the liver and increase the risk of liver damage, particularly if you are taking amiodarone. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for more advice.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the hospital website www.wsh.nhs.uk and click on the link, or visit the disabledgo website:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>