

Patient information

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics

(ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, ofloxacin, delafloxacin)



If you require a translation of this leaflet, please contact the regional Medicines Information Service via 01473 703604 or use [Google Translate](#)

Further information in addition to this leaflet can be found through this link to the [Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#)

What are fluoroquinolones?

Fluoroquinolones belong to a family of antibiotics that are used to treat or prevent bacterial infections. These antibiotics are of great value in treating severe infections when other antibiotics are not suitable. They should be used for the shortest effective time to treat your infection.

How should I take them?

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics are usually taken by mouth once or twice daily.

Dairy products (e.g. milk or yoghurt) or food/drinks with added calcium, iron and/or magnesium may reduce how well the antibiotics are absorbed by the body. You should take your fluoroquinolone antibiotic at least 1 to 2 hours before, or at least 4 hours after these products.

What are the potential side effects?

Although most patients tolerate these antibiotics well, a small number of patients may develop serious side effects:

Stop taking your antibiotics and contact your doctor immediately if you have the following signs of a side effect:

- **Cardiovascular symptoms** – are more likely to occur in elderly patients, symptoms can include chest pain, difficulty breathing (especially whilst lying flat), deep stomach pain (pulsating or discomfort), or changes to your voice.
- **Joint and movement disorders** – this may include difficulty walking, abnormal pain or sensations in the ankle, calf, shoulders or arms, such as persistent pins and needles, tingling, numbness, burning or weakness - **if this happens, rest the painful area until you can see your doctor**
 - Can occur within 48 hours of starting fluoroquinolones but may occur several months after stopping.
- **Suicidal thoughts and behaviours** – there is a risk of psychiatric reactions, including depression and psychotic reactions, which may potentially lead to thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.

If you cannot contact your doctor, call 111 for advice.

If these symptoms occur, continue to take your medication, and seek further advice from your doctor or pharmacist:

- **Gastro-intestinal symptoms** – may include diarrhoea (if this becomes persistent or there is blood or mucous present)
- **Mood changes** – severe tiredness, depressed mood, anxiety, problems with your memory or severe problems sleeping
- **Sensory symptoms** – changes in your vision, taste, smell, or hearing.

Special care and consideration will be taken for patients who are deemed at a higher risk of side effects, including those who:

- are over 60 years of age
- have pre-existing heart conditions
- have impaired kidney function
- have had organ transplants
- are taking steroids such as prednisolone or hydrocortisone
- have a history of seizures – **increased seizure activity** can occur, please discuss with your doctor before starting treatment
- have had previous C. difficile infection.

Who can I tell about my side effects?

Please report any side effects to the MHRA via the Yellow Card Scheme. Reports are confidential and help to improve the safety of medicines. Report side effects on the website (visit <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or search for Yellow Card Scheme) and on the Yellow Card App on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

Drug interactions

The following medications may **increase** the risk of side effects if taken with your fluoroquinolone antibiotic- please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before starting if you take any of the following:

- Clozapine
- Methotrexate
- Pentoxifylline
- Phenytoin
- Probenecid
- Ropinirole
- Theophylline
- Tizanidine
- Warfarin.

Avoid taking the following products at the same time of day as your fluoroquinolone antibiotic, as they may affect how well your antibiotic works:

- Antacids
- Medicines containing calcium, aluminium, magnesium or iron
- Mineral supplements
- Polymeric phosphate binder (e.g. Sevelamer)
- Sucralfate.

Driving and machinery

If you experience reduced alertness (e.g. tiredness or fatigue), do not drive a vehicle, or operate machinery. If in doubt, ask your doctor.

What about pregnancy or breastfeeding?

Generally, to be avoided, only to be recommended where appropriate by specialists where the risk vs. benefit has been discussed with the patient.

What should I do with any unwanted antibiotic(s)?

If you have any unwanted antibiotics, please return them to a local community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy for safe disposal.

You should **not** keep them for another time.

Who can I speak to if I have any questions?

If you have any questions regarding your fluoroquinolone antibiotic, if you are:

- A patient under the care of your local GP surgery or primary care centre, contact either your local community pharmacy or GP surgery.

- An **inpatient or outpatient under the care of a hospital**, please contact the appropriate hospital as below:
 - **Colchester Hospital or Ipswich Hospital:** Medicines Information - 01473 703604
 - **West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust:** Medicines Information team - 01284 713109.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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