

Patient Information: **Medicines**



Medicines for chronic kidney disease



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What is this leaflet about?

Medicines can be used to help the symptoms of chronic kidney disease (CKD). This leaflet is designed to give you more information about the most common medicines for CKD and some of their possible side effects. For more information ask your doctor or pharmacist.





What types of medicines may I need?

Some of the most common medicines that you may be prescribed include:

Medicines that thin your blood

These include aspirin or clopidogrel. These are usually taken once a day in the morning with breakfast. Side effects include indigestion, and bruising. Note: low dose aspirin (75mg once a day) is safe in kidney failure.

Medicines that reduce cholesterol in your blood

These include the 'statins' atorvastatin, simvastatin, pravastatin or rosuvastatin. These are usually taken once a day in the evening. Note: 'statins' can cause muscle pain so tell your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you have any unexplained muscle aches and pains.

Other medicines that can be used to reduce cholesterol include ezetimibe and bezafibrate.



Medicines that reduce acid in your stomach (antacids)

These medicines prevent indigestion or problems with stomach ulcers. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) (omeprazole, lansoprazole) are usually taken once a day. Side effects include diarrhoea and in rare cases they can worsen kidney problems. Your doctor will watch your routine blood tests and change your medication in the rare event that it is causing a problem for you.

H₂-antagonists (ranitidine, cimetidine) are usually taken once or twice a day. Side effects include tiredness, and headaches.

Medicines to stop your blood becoming too acidic

Sodium bicarbonate is used to prevent your blood becoming too acidic. The dose depends on the acid level, and is adjusted to keep the level right, but is usually two or three times a day. Side effects include stomach cramps, belching and flatulence.

Medicines that relieve constipation.

Lactulose, senna, docusate or fybogel are given to treat or prevent constipation. They can be taken once or twice a day. They may take a day or so to be effective. Side effects include belching or stomach cramps. Fybogel should not be taken if you are on a fluid restriction.



Medicines that reduce itching (antihistamines)

Antihistamines are used to reduce itching which is a common symptom of CKD that can happen as waste products build up in your body. There are many types available, and some can be bought from your pharmacist. Make sure that you don't take twice the recommended dose – do not take antihistamines from your doctor and those you have bought. Antihistamines include chlorphenamine, hydroxyzine, loratadine and cetirizine. Note: these tablets are not always effective, and may make you drowsy.

Medicines to help with restless legs

Some kidney patients find that they get restless feelings in their legs. Pramipexole, ropinirole, gabapentin and clonazepam can be used to help with this. Pramipexole and ropinirole can cause impulsive behaviours such as excessive gambling or eating, if this occurs please tell your doctor. All of these medicines may make you drowsy.



Medicines to treat gout

People with CKD may suffer from gout. Dialysis can help with this. Allopurinol and febuxostat are medicines that can be used to prevent gout. Patients with CKD will only need a low dose. If your gout comes back please see your doctor. Neither of these medications can be taken at the same time as a medicine called azathioprine. If you are on azathioprine and have gout, it is important to chat to your doctor about an alternative treatment.

Hepatitis B vaccination

You are advised to have hepatitis B vaccinations before you need dialysis. This is a viral infection spread through infected blood or bodily fluids so having dialysis can make you vulnerable to catching the infection. .

Medicines to relieve pain

Paracetamol is fine to take for all CKD patients. Co-codamol or co-dydramol are also safe, but you may need a smaller dose.

Anti-inflammatory medicines (such as ibuprofen ('Nurofen') and high dose aspirin) should not be used by CKD patients or those with a kidney transplant but can be used with care in patients on dialysis. Talk to your kidney doctor or pharmacist before taking them.



Looking after your medicines

You should store your medicines in their original packet in a cool, dry place out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not get rid of any expired or unwanted tablets by flushing them down the toilet or throwing them away. Take them to your local pharmacy who will dispose of them for you.



Where can I find out more information?

- Patient View: www.patientview.org – online access to your health records. Ask your renal unit for details about how to join
- Think kidneys website: www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk/ckd/information-for-the-public



www.kidneycareuk.org



01420 541424



Kidney Care UK,
3 The Windmills,
St Mary's Close,
Turk Street,
Alton GU34 1EF



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www.renal.org



0117 4148152



The Renal Association
C/O UK Renal Registry,
Learning and Research Building,
Southmead Hospital,
Bristol BS10 5NB



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