Oxcarbazepine prevents fits.

Take it regularly, twice a day. Do not stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to.

It may cause you to feel sleepy, especially when you first start taking it.

About oxcarbazepine

<table>
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<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>An antiepileptic medicine</th>
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<td>Used for</td>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Trileptal®</td>
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<td>Available as</td>
<td>Tablets and oral liquid medicine (suspension)</td>
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Having epilepsy means that you have had more than one otherwise unexplained fit, or seizure. A seizure is a short episode of symptoms caused by a burst of abnormal electrical activity in your brain. Different parts of the brain control different functions of your body, so the symptoms that occur during a seizure will depend on where the abnormal burst of electrical activity occurs. Symptoms that may occur during a seizure can affect your muscles, sensations, behaviour, emotions, consciousness, or a combination of these. The seizures can be prevented in most people by suitable antiepileptic medication. Oxcarbazepine works by stabilising the electrical activity of your brain, which prevents the seizures from occurring.

Before taking oxcarbazepine

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 oxcarbazepine it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breast-feeding.
- If you have any problems with the way your kidneys work, or with the way your liver works.
- If you have a heart condition.
- If you have been told you have low levels of sodium in your blood.
- If you have a rare inherited blood disorder called porphyria.
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, such as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take oxcarbazepine

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about oxcarbazepine and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Take oxcarbazepine exactly as your doctor tells you to. It is usual to start treatment on a low dose, and then for the dose to be increased gradually to a regular maintenance dose. You will be asked to take two doses every day. Doses for children are tailored to their age and weight.
• Try to take your doses at the same times of day, each day. Having a routine will help you to remember to take your doses regularly. If you have difficulties swallowing tablets whole, you can break them into halves to make them easier to swallow. Taking them with a drink of water also helps. You can take oxcarbazepine either before or after meals.
• If you (or your child) have been given oxcarbazepine oral liquid medicine, make sure you understand how to measure the correct dose using the oral syringe provided. If you are unsure, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to show you.
• 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. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

• When you first start a new treatment for epilepsy there may be a change in the number or type of seizures you experience. Your doctor will advise you about this.
• Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. You may need to have blood tests from time to time.
• Different formulations and makes of oxcarbazepine can act in a slightly different way in your body. Because of this, your doctor may recommend that you continue to take oxcarbazepine from the same manufacturer each time you obtain a new supply. If so, each time you collect a prescription, check to make sure your supply looks the same and that the name is the same. If you are unsure, or if you have any questions about your prescription, please ask your pharmacist to advise you.
• If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable for you to take. This is because some medicines interfere with oxcarbazepine, and oxcarbazepine can also alter the way other medicines work.
• People with epilepsy must stop driving at first. Your doctor will advise you about when it may be possible for you to start driving again. This will usually be after a year free of seizures.
• You should avoid getting pregnant, as antiepileptic medicines can harm an unborn child. Make sure you have discussed with your doctor which types of contraception are suitable for you and your partner. If you want to have a family, discuss this with your doctor so that you can be given advice from a specialist before you become pregnant.
• While you are being treated for epilepsy there is a small risk that you may develop mood changes, distressing thoughts and feelings about suicide. If this happens, you must tell your doctor about it straightaway.
• You need to take oxcarbazepine regularly every day. Do not stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to stop. Stopping treatment suddenly can cause problems and your doctor will want you to reduce your dose gradually if this becomes necessary.
• If you drink alcohol, ask your doctor for advice. Your doctor may advise you not to drink alcohol while you are on this medicine.

Can oxcarbazepine 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 oxcarbazepine. 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.
Common oxcarbazepine side-effects

| Feeling or being sick, tummy (abdominal) pain, diarrhoea or constipation | Try to stick to simple meals. Avoid rich and spicy food |
| Feeling dizzy, tired or sleepy; blurred or double vision | Do not drive or use tools or machines |
| Headache | Ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller |
| Mood changes such as feeling confused or depressed, feeling unsteady, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, a spinning sensation (vertigo), skin rash, hair thinning, low sodium (your doctor will check for this) and acne | If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor for advice |

**Important:** your doctor will discuss with you the possibility that oxcarbazepine can cause liver, blood and skin disorders. Although these occur less commonly than the side-effects listed above, it is important that you contact your doctor straightaway if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- A high temperature.
- Extreme tiredness with confusion or muscle twitches.
- A severe skin rash.
- Mouth ulcers.
- Unexplained bruising or bleeding.

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

**How to store oxcarbazepine**

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
- Once a bottle of Trileptal® oral suspension has been opened, it should not be used or stored for more than seven weeks. After this time, get a new supply.

**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. 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.

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

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, Trileptal® 150 mg, 300 mg, 600 mg Film-coated tablets; Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2013.
- Manufacturer’s PIL, Trileptal® 60 mg/ml Oral Suspension; Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2013.