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## Frovatriptan for migraine (Migard)



Frovatriptan is used to treat migraine headaches. Take one tablet as soon as you start to feel the head pain develop. Do not take it before the headache begins (for example, during the 'aura phase'), as it may be less effective.

Frovatriptan can make you feel tired or sleepy. If this happens, do not drive or use tools or machines. Your chest may feel tight or 'heavy' after taking frovatriptan. These sensations do not usually last long, but if they continue or become intense, do not take any more frovatriptan tablets, and let your doctor know as soon as possible.

### About frovatriptan

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of medicine</b> | Atriptan (also known as a 5HT <sub>1</sub> -receptor agonist) |
| <b>Used for</b>         | Treatment of a migraine attack                                |
| <b>Also called</b>      | Migard®   |
| <b>Available as</b>     | Tablets   |

In people with **migraine**, it is thought that some chemicals in the brain increase in activity and as a result parts of the brain then send out confused signals which result in the symptoms of headache and sickness. Why people with migraine should develop these chemical changes is not clear, but for some people there may be things which trigger an attack, like certain foods or drinks.

Frovatriptan belongs to a class of medicines known as 5HT<sub>1</sub>-receptor agonists. They are also known simply as triptans. Triptans work by stimulating the receptors of a natural substance in the brain called serotonin (also called 5HT). This eases the symptoms of a migraine attack.

Frovatriptan is effective in relieving migraine attacks once an attack has started, but it does not help prevent headaches or migraine attacks from starting.

### Before taking frovatriptan

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 frovatriptan it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are aged over 65 years or under 18 years.
- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- If you have a heart condition, angina, or if you have ever had a heart attack.
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have circulation problems caused by a condition called peripheral arterial disease.
- If you have ever had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (also referred to as a TIA or a 'mini-stroke').
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

## How to take frovatriptan

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about frovatriptan, and it will also provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience from taking it.
- Take frovatriptan exactly as your doctor tells you to. Take one tablet as soon as the headache phase develops. If your migraine at first improves but then comes back, you may take a second tablet, providing it is at least **two hours** after the initial dose. Do not take more than two tablets in 24 hours. If the first tablet has no effect, do not take a second dose for the same attack, as it is unlikely to work.
- Swallow the tablet with a drink of water. You can take frovatriptan whether or not you have recently eaten.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- Frovatriptan is used to treat headache pain during a migraine attack, not to stop the pain from coming on. You should wait until the headache (pain) is just beginning to develop, rather than taking it at the aura stage or when you feel that a migraine may be developing. Triptans probably work much less well if taken too early on in an attack.
- Some people may benefit from taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory painkiller (such as naproxen) in addition to frovatriptan. Your doctor will advise you about this if it is recommended for you. Do not take migraine treatments such as other triptans or ergotamine at the same time as frovatriptan.
- If you find that frovatriptan does not relieve your migraine, make an appointment to discuss this with your doctor, as an alternative medicine may be more effective for you.
- It can help to keep a migraine diary. Note down when and where each migraine attack started, what you were doing, and what you had eaten that day. A pattern may emerge and it may be possible for you to avoid some of the things that trigger your migraine attacks.
- Frovatriptan is used to treat migraine attacks once the pain has started, but there are other medicines available that may help to reduce the number of migraine attacks. If you have migraines frequently, discuss this with your doctor.
- Some people who have frequent migraine attacks are in fact getting medication-induced headache. Medication-induced headache (also called medication-overuse headache) is caused by taking painkillers or triptans too often. If you use frovatriptan or painkillers on more than two days a week on a regular basis, you may be at risk of this. You should talk to your doctor if you suspect it.

## Can frovatriptan 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 frovatriptan. 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 frovatriptan side-effects (these affect less than 1 in 10 people)         | What can I do if I experience this?                                   |
|--|---|
| Dry mouth  | Try chewing sugar-free gum or sucking sugar-free sweets               |
| Feeling sick, indigestion, stomach pain  | Stick to simple foods and drinks                                      |
| Problems with eyesight, and feeling tired, dizzy, or sleepy                      | If this happens, do not drive or use tools or machines                |
| Tingling sensations, feeling hot, flushing, sweating, headache, chest discomfort | If any of these become troublesome or intense, speak with your doctor |

**Important:** after taking a triptan, some people can feel intense tightness or heaviness, particularly in the throat or chest. If this happens to you, do not take any further doses of frovatriptan and speak with your doctor about it as soon as possible.

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

## How to store frovatriptan

- 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.

If you are having an operation or any 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, Migard®](#); A Menarini Farmaceutica Internazionale SRL, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2014.
- British National Formulary, 71st Edition (Mar-Sep 2016) British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Original Author:<br>Helen Allen | Current Version:<br>Helen Allen | Peer Reviewer:<br>Dr Adrian Bonsall |
| Document ID:<br>3865 (v25)      | Last Checked:<br>14/04/2016     | Next Review:<br>14/04/2019          |

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