



TOPIRAMATE - INFORMED CONSENT FOR MEDICATION

Medication Category: anti-seizure medication

Medications in this Category: topiramate (Topamax)

Anticipated dosage range: _____

About Your Medicine: Topamax is an antiepileptic drug, prescribed to control both the mild attacks known as partial seizures and the severe tonic-clonic convulsions known as grand mal seizures. It is typically added to the treatment regimen when other drugs fail to fully control a patient's attacks. Topiramate has been studied for binge eating and found to reduce binge eating in males and females. (i)

Side Effects: Some side effects, such as fatigue, are more likely to surface with high doses of Topamax. Others can occur regardless of dosage. While many tend to disappear after the first 8 weeks of therapy, it is still important to report them to your prescriber. Only your prescriber can determine if it is safe for you to continue taking Topamax.

Possible side effects include:

More common: Abdominal pain, abnormal coordination, abnormal vision, agitation, anxiety, appetite loss, back pain, breast pain, chest pain, confusion, constipation, depression, difficulty with concentration, difficulty with memory, dizziness, double vision, drowsiness, fatigue, flu-like symptoms, indigestion, language problems, tingling or burning sensations, tremors, weakness, weight loss.

Less Common: Abnormal gait, abnormal menstrual bleeding, acne, aggressiveness, allergy, apathy, bladder infection, changes in taste, bloody urine, body odor, decreased awareness, decreased mobility, decreased sensitivity, diarrhea, digestive inflammation, dry mouth, exaggerated sense of well being, eye pain, feelings of illness, feelings of unreality, fever, fluid retention, frequent urination, gas, gum inflammation, hair loss, hallucinations, headache, hearing difficulties, hot flashes, hyperactivity, impotence, increased sweating, involuntary muscle movement, irritable bladder, joint pain, kidney stones, loss of balance, loss of consciousness, low sex drive, mood swings, muscle ache, muscle tension, muscle weakness, nosebleeds, painful or difficult urination, personality problems, pinkeye, ringing in the ears, sensitivity to touch, severe itching, shivers, shortness of breath, sleeplessness, suicidal tendencies, swelling upper respiratory infection, urinary infection, urinary incontinence, vaginal infection, vomiting, weight gain.

Topamax increases your risk of developing kidney stones. To prevent this problem, be sure to take this medication with plenty of fluids.

In children, the more common side effects are abnormal gait, aggressiveness, behavior problems, confusion, constipation, difficulty concentrating, difficulty with memory, difficulty sleeping, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, increased muscle movement, increased saliva, injury, loss of appetite, loss of coordination, nausea, nervousness, nosebleed, pneumonia, rash, speech problems, urinary incontinence, viral infection, and weight loss.

Other less common side effects in children include allergic reaction, digestive inflammation, increased thirst, skin disorders, slowing of movement, vaginal discharge, vision disorders, and weakened reflexes.

Rare: Topamax has also been known to cause a number of very rare side effects in adults and children (typically striking less than one person in a hundred). If you develop any unfamiliar problems while taking Topamax, report them to your prescriber.

If Topamax gives you an allergic reaction, you'll be unable to use the drug.

Precautions: Do not abruptly stop taking Topamax. If the drug isn't withdrawn gradually, your risk of seizures will increase. It is important to take this medication exactly as prescribed. It can be taken with or without food. Avoid breaking the tablets; the medication has a bitter taste. If you **miss a dose**, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to your regular schedule. Never take two doses at once.

Special warnings about this medication: Because Topamax sometimes causes confusion, dizziness, fatigue, and problems with coordination and concentration; *you* should not drive, operate machinery, or participate in any hazardous activity that requires full mental alertness until you are certain how the drug affects you.

Topamax has been known to trigger severe nearsightedness with increased pressure inside the eye. The problem usually occurs within 1 month of starting treatment. If you develop blurred vision or eye pain, call your doctor immediately. Discontinuation of the drug may be necessary to prevent permanent vision loss.

Tell your prescriber if you have kidney problems or if you are on hemodialysis. Your dosage of Topamax may need adjustment. Also make sure the doctor is aware of any liver disorder you may have. Topamax must be used cautiously by individuals with impaired *liver* function.

Possible food and drug interactions when taking this medication

If Topamax is taken with certain other drugs, the effects of either could be increased, decreased or altered. It is especially important to check with your prescriber before combining Topamax with: Acetazolamide (Diamox), carbamazepine (Tegretol), Dichlorphenamide (Daranide), Digoxin (Lanoxin), Metformin (Glucophage), Phenytoin (Dilantin), Oral contraceptives, Valproic acid (Depakene). Topamax can depress the central nervous system. Be extremely cautious about combining it with alcohol, sedatives, tranquilizers, and other central nervous system depressants.

Special Information: If you are pregnant or breastfeeding. In animal studies, Topamax has caused harm to the developing fetus, and its safety has not been verified in pregnant humans. It is recommended for use during pregnancy only if the doctor feels that its potential benefit outweighs the potential risk to the infant. This medication may appear in breast milk, and its possible effect on the nursing infant remains unknown. Check with your doctor if you plan to breastfeed your baby.

Recommended dosage:

Adults: Topamax therapy usually begins with a dose of 50 milligrams once daily during the first week. The daily dosage is then increased each week until, by the eighth week, the patient is taking 200 milligrams twice a day. For people with poor kidney function, the dosage is usually cut in half. On the other hand, those undergoing hemodialysis may need a supplemental dose. If you are also taking Dilantin or Tegretol, the dosage of Topamax may need adjustment. Likewise, the doctor may adjust your dosage if you have liver problems.

Children: The usual daily dose for children 2 to 16 years of age is 5 to 9 milligrams for every 2.2 pounds of body weight, divided into two doses. Topamax therapy usually begins with a dose of 25 milligrams (or less) once daily during the first week. The daily dosage is then increased each week until the prescriber is satisfied with the patient's response. It may take eight weeks to reach the ideal dose.

Overdosage: Any medication taken in excess can have serious consequences. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

By my signature below, I give consent for the above-named medication to be administered and for a change of medication within this medication category. My signature also indicates that I am aware of, have read and discussed the reasons for the use of this medication, and its potential risks and benefits.

Client Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

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I McElroy SL; Arnold LM; Shapira NA; Keck PE; Rosenthal NR; Karim MR; Kamin M; Hudson JI Topiramate in the treatment of binge eating disorder associated with obesity: a randomized, placebo-controlled trial. Am J Psychiatry 2003 Feb; 160(2):255-61