Linaclotide for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome associated with constipation

This leaflet is for patients who have been advised to take linaclotide for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C). If, after reading this leaflet, you have any further questions or concerns, please call the Medicines Information Patient Helpline on 020 8725 1033.

What is irritable bowel syndrome with constipation?
Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common, long-term condition of the digestive system. The symptoms vary between individuals and affect some people more severely than others. They tend to come and go in periods lasting a few days to a few months at a time, often during times of stress or after eating certain foods. In some people IBS is associated with diarrhoea, and in others it is associated with constipation. The main symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C) are:

- bloating
- infrequent, hard or small stool (faeces)
- stomach/abdominal pain.

What is linaclotide?
Linaclotide is a medicine used to treat the symptoms associated with IBS-C. The medicine acts on the gut, helping to relieve pain and bloating, and to restore the normal functioning of the bowel. Linaclotide is not absorbed into the body, but attaches to a receptor called guanylate cyclase C on the surface of the gut. By attaching to this receptor, linaclotide blocks the sensation of pain and allows liquid from the body to enter into the gut, which in turn loosens the stool and increases bowel movements.

Are there any side effects?
The most common side effect of linaclotide is diarrhoea. This is usually short lived. If the diarrhoea is severe, lasts for seven days or more, or causes you to feel light-headed or dizzy, you should stop using linaclotide treatment immediately, drink plenty of fluids and seek further advice from your GP.

Some people may also experience:
- abdominal (stomach) pain
- flatulence
- bloating
- dizziness
- stomach flu (viral gastroenteritis).

Please refer to manufacturers information leaflet contained within the medication packet for a full list of possible side effects.
You should always be sure to let any doctors or nurses know about the medicines you are taking.

**Are there any alternatives?**
You may have already tried lifestyle changes, laxatives or antidepressant drugs to manage the symptoms of IBS-C. Linaclotide is the next step in treatment options for IBS-C. Please discuss with your doctor how to manage your symptoms should you choose not to try linaclotide treatment.

**How should linaclotide be taken?**
Linaclotide should be taken as one 290microgram capsule first thing in the morning, at least 30 minutes before breakfast or any other medications.

Linaclotide should be continued for four weeks before treatment is reviewed. If there has been no improvement to your IBS-C, linaclotide treatment will be stopped. If your symptoms have improved, linaclotide will be continued, providing any side effects you are experiencing are not too severe.

Your GP will review your treatment again after 12 weeks. If there is a reduction in frequency of IBS-C symptoms, treatment will be continued. If there has been no change in the frequency of IBS-C symptoms, linaclotide treatment should be stopped.

Once you have been taking linaclotide for six months, ongoing treatment will be reviewed by a consultant gastroenterologist. Supplies of the medicine will be available following review from both the hospital and from your GP.

**What should I do if I miss a dose of linaclotide?**
If you miss a dose, do not take a double dose to make up for the forgotten dose. Instead, simply take the next scheduled dose as normal.

If you take too many capsules, please contact your doctor or pharmacist. The most likely effect is diarrhoea.

**Always store your medication as per the manufacturer’s directions.**

**Contact us**
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please contact the Medicines Information Patient Helpline on **020 8725 1033** (9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday). Outside of these hours, please leave a voicemail.

**Additional services**
**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**
PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

**NHS Choices**
NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)