

Bezafibrate for Primary Biliary Cholangitis

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking bezafibrate to treat your primary biliary cholangitis (PBC). If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor, pharmacist or nurse caring for you.

What is bezafibrate?

Bezafibrate is a medication used for the treatment of primary biliary cholangitis. It is used 'off licence' which means that the medication is used for a different condition than for which it is licensed. It is licensed for the treatment of high cholesterol.

There is no cure for PBC but for most people, ursodeoxycholic acid (UDCA) is very effective at controlling the disease. However, for some patients, UDCA is less effective or not tolerated. These patients may receive additional treatment with bezafibrate in addition to or instead of UDCA.

Bezafibrate is generally well-tolerated and has few side effects but does require monitoring with blood tests when it is first started. Some studies have also shown that bezafibrate can reduce itching, which can be very severe in some patients with PBC.

The information contained within this patient information leaflet should also be read alongside the patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer.

How do I take the medicine?

Swallow bezafibrate tablets whole with a glass of water. Bezafibrate can be taken either in the morning or evening, ideally during or after a meal.

Take your bezafibrate tablets at the same time each day.

What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?

If you forget to take your bezafibrate tablet, take it as soon as you remember it.

However, if it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.

Do not take two doses at the same time or extra doses.

Are there any side effects?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, most patients taking bezafibrate tablets have no side effects or only have mild side effects. Speak to your liver team if you do experience side effects.

The most commonly reported side effects include gastrointestinal problems (including stomach pain, heartburn, upset stomach, diarrhoea or constipation or not feeling hungry). These side effects are generally mild and usually resolve themselves.

If you develop any of the following side effects, seek medical advice:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (e.g. rash, hives, itching, wheezing, tightness in the chest or throat, trouble breathing, swallowing or talking. Swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat).
- If you develop dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-coloured stools, vomiting or yellow skin or eyes.
- Sudden pain in the upper right belly area, right shoulder area or between the shoulder blades, yellow skin or eyes, fever with chills.
- Muscle pain or weakness.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Storage:

Store your bezafibrate tablets in a cool, dry place and out of the reach of children.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:

There are very limited data examining the safety of bezafibrate in pregnancy and breastfeeding. If you think you are pregnant or are planning on becoming pregnant, speak to your liver team to discuss this.

Other medications:

Bring a complete list of all the medications (including over the counter medicines, inhalers, eye drops / ear drops, creams, patches, injections, herbal medicines, vitamins and supplements) you are currently prescribed and currently taking to your appointment with your liver team.

If you start on any new medicines while taking your bezafibrate tablets, ensure that the prescriber is aware that you are taking bezafibrate.

If you are already taking or start a statin medication (e.g. simvastatin, atorvastatin, rosuvastatin), you will need close monitoring (with blood tests) to ensure that the combination of bezafibrate and a statin is safe.

How do I get a repeat prescription?

Your liver team will provide the first prescription for your bezafibrate tablets from St. George's Hospital. If you are tolerating the bezafibrate and have no side effects, we may ask your GP practice to continue prescribing it and you will be able to get your medicines from your community pharmacy.

Useful sources of information

PBC Foundation (Tel: 0131 5566811, website: www.pbcfoundation.org.uk)

British Liver Trust: (Tel: 0800 652 7330, website: www.britishlivertrust.org.uk)

UK-PBC - Stratified Medicine in Primary Biliary Cholangitis (website: www.uk-pbc.com)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about bezafibrate, please contact the Medicines Information patient helpline on 020 8725 1033 (Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays), 11am to 3pm) or the secretary for your liver consultant or liver pharmacist (telephone number available on the top of your clinic letters).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

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

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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