



Topiramate

(Pronounced toe-pir-a-mate)

Why has topiramate been prescribed?

Topiramate is a mood stabiliser and anticonvulsant. These medications can be prescribed to treat mood disorders. Topiramate is also used for migraine prevention.

What are the benefits of taking topiramate?

Topiramate is effective in reducing the severity of the symptoms of mood disturbance associated with bipolar disorder. It also shortens the time to recovery and prevents return of symptoms.

Are there any precautions with topiramate?

Topiramate is suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe topiramate, but let your prescriber know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- If you have epilepsy, glaucoma, diabetes, Parkinson's disease or suffer from heart, liver or kidney trouble.
- If you are taking any other medication especially medication for schizophrenia, anticonvulsants, antidepressants or an oral contraceptive pill. Also, tell your prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket. Please also tell your prescriber if you take any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines. St John's Wort should not be taken by patients prescribed topiramate.
- If you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.
- If you have an intolerance to lactose as this is an ingredient in the film coated tablets (except for those made by Actavis UK Ltd brand and it is also not an ingredient of any of the capsules). Ask your pharmacist if you are unsure about any product.

What is the usual dose of topiramate?

The starting dose is usually 25mg at night. The dose is then usually slowly increased. The usual dose of topiramate may be between 100mg and 200mg daily in split doses. It may take some time to get to the dose that is most suitable. If you are already taking sodium valproate, lower doses are used.

How should topiramate be taken?

Topiramate is usually taken twice daily. However, you and your prescriber may decide that it is better for you to take the medicine at another time. The tablets and capsules should be swallowed whole or the capsules can be opened and sprinkled onto a spoonful of food and then swallowed whole.

What form does topiramate come in?

Topiramate is available as tablets and capsules. The tablets are available as 25mg, 50mg, 100mg and 200mg and the capsules as 15mg, 25mg and 50mg.

What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the usual dose. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

What will happen when topiramate is first taken?

Topiramate, like many medicines, does not work straight away. For example, it may take several days or even weeks for some symptoms to improve. To begin with, some people find that topiramate may help them feel more calm and relaxed. Later, (usually after a few days or more) other symptoms should begin to improve. Many people do not experience any side effects. However some people may experience some side effects. We have listed potential side effects in the table below, whether or not they are likely to be short or long-term and what measures can be taken is also described. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0808 100 3352 or go to www.mhra.gov.uk.

Is topiramate addictive?

Topiramate is not addictive, but if you stop taking the medicine suddenly, you may experience unpleasant physical feelings.

What about alcohol?

It is recommended that people taking topiramate should not drink alcohol. This is because both mood stabilisers and alcohol can cause drowsiness. If the two are taken together, severe drowsiness can result. This can lead to falls and accidents. As well as this, drinking alcohol may make mania, depression and anxiety worse. However, once people are used to taking medication, then very small amounts of alcohol may not be harmful. It pays to be very careful, because alcohol affects people in different ways, especially when they are taking medication. Never drink alcohol and drive. Discuss any concerns you have with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

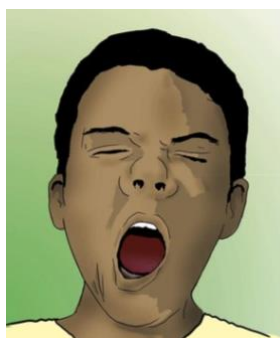
Is it OK to stop taking topiramate when symptoms go away?

No. If you stop taking topiramate, your original symptoms are very likely to return. Most people need to remain on topiramate for quite a long time, sometimes years. You should always discuss with your prescriber any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines.

Are there any alternatives to topiramate?

Yes, there are alternatives available. Although mood stabilisers have broadly similar therapeutic effects they differ in the side effects they produce. There are several mood stabilisers available so most people can find one which suits them. Psychological therapies can also help in bipolar disorder, usually in addition to medication.

Summary of side effects



Drowsiness - Common

What can be done about it?

This usually occurs when topiramate is started. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to alter the dose or preparation of topiramate.



Dizziness – Common

What can be done about it?

This may wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.



Tingling in the arms and legs - Common

What can be done about it?

This may wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.



Nausea - Common

What can be done about it?

This usually occurs when topiramate is started. Taking the medication with food or after food may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.



Weight loss – Common (palpitations)

What can be done about it?

For some people this may be a benefit of treatment however if weight loss is of concern discuss with your prescriber.



Diarrhoea – Common (loose stools)

What can be done about it?

This should wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.

Other (less common) side effects	How common is it and what can be done about it?
Changes in mood	Uncommon Tell your prescriber straightaway if you notice any change in mood.
Confusion, difficulty concentrating or poor memory	Uncommon Tell your prescriber straightaway if you become in any way confused or disorientated.
Double or blurred vision	Uncommon This usually occurs when topiramate is started or the dose is increased. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to alter the dose or preparation of topiramate.
Ataxia (unsteadiness)	Uncommon This usually occurs when topiramate is started or the dose is increased. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to alter the dose or preparation of topiramate.
Tremor	Rare This usually occurs when topiramate is started or the dose is increased. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to alter the dose or preparation of topiramate.
Rash	Rare Contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for advice.
Blood dyscrasias (low white blood cells)	Very rare Any sore throat or fever should be reported to your prescriber immediately.
Liver damage	Very rare Report any signs of bruising or bleeding to your prescriber.

Very common = almost everyone affected
Common = many people affected
Uncommon = some people affected

Rare = few people affected
Very rare = very few or no one affected

Disclaimer

This leaflet does not replace the official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet.

For more information, visit www.slam.nhs.uk/meds or speak to a health care professional.

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