

# Information about Pyridostigmine Bromide

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## **Why am I being prescribed pyridostigmine (brand name Mestinon®)?**

We use Pyridostigmine to treat symptoms in Myasthenia Gravis. It helps messages get through to the muscle so that muscle strength improves. We may prescribe it along with other drugs to treat your Myasthenia.

## **When and how do I take pyridostigmine?**

Your doctor will advise you on your dose. You should try to take your medicine at a time when you need your muscles to work the most. This could be first thing in the morning when getting up, or before mealtimes to help with eating, chewing or swallowing, depending on your symptoms. Leave at least 3- 4 hours between doses and try to keep to the same times every day.

## **What dose do I take?**

Your doctor will advise you. Often your doctor will start you on a lower dose (for example 15mg, (a quarter tablet) or 30mg (half a tablet)) and increase gradually to the recommended dose, depending on your symptoms. Usually your doctor will prescribe 3 to 4 whole tablets a day. Do not change your dose or take more than prescribed by your doctor, as this can increase muscle weakness.

## **What should I do if I miss a dose?**

It is important to take pyridostigmine on time and exactly as it has been prescribed.

If you miss one dose within an hour of the prescribed time, you should take the missed dose and continue with the other doses at your usual times.

If you miss the dose by more than one hour, you should take the dose immediately and then wait 3 to 4 hours before taking the next dose. Then take any other doses at the normal time.

**Never double dose to make up for a missed one.**

## **How long will pyridostigmine take to work?**

Your medicine takes 30 - 60 minutes to work and the effects last for about 4 hours.

## **What are the possible side effects?**

The common side effects of pyridostigmine are:

- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Increased saliva

If you experience any of these side effects do not stop taking your medication. Contact your doctor or nurse for further advice. The side effects usually disappear once the dose is reduced. There are also other medications you can take to help with these side effects. Your consultant or GP can advise further on this.

## **Can I take other medicines along with pyridostigmine?**

Yes, you can safely take other medicines with pyridostigmine. It is important that you tell your doctor about all medicines you are taking and if you suffer from:

**Asthma**

**Difficulty passing urine**

**Epilepsy**

**Heart problems**

**Kidney problems**

**Parkinson's disease**

**Peptic ulcer**

## **Does pyridostigmine affect fertility or pregnancy?**

There is no evidence to suggest that pyridostigmine affects fertility or is harmful to the baby during pregnancy. However tell your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant.

## **May I drink alcohol while taking pyridostigmine?**

Yes, there is no particular reason for you to avoid alcohol while taking pyridostigmine. However only take alcohol in moderation.

## **Where can I obtain more information?**

If you would like any further information about pyridostigmine, or if you have any concerns about your treatment, please discuss these with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.