

# DONEPEZIL

Other names: Donepezil (Rex)<sup>®</sup>, Aricept<sup>®</sup>



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why are you taking this medication?

Donepezil is used to ease the symptoms of dementia associated with Alzheimer's disease, such as memory loss.

Donepezil belongs to a group of medicines called acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. It works by increasing the level of acetylcholine, a chemical found naturally in the brain. It is thought that lower levels of this chemical can lead to a reduction in attention, language, memory, orientation and reason. Donepezil reduces symptoms such as memory loss in patients with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

## When to take this medicine

Donepezil can be taken with or without food, if possible at bedtime.

## If you miss a dose

Take your dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- sudden signs of allergy such as:
  - rash or hives
  - swelling of the face or lips
  - trouble breathing
- feeling agitated or a change in mood
- hallucinations
- frequent urination (peeing)
- muscle cramps
- seizures
- fainting

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you:

- insomnia (not being able to sleep)
- headache
- stomach upset (these symptoms may pass after a few days of using the medicine)
- dizziness or tiredness. **Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how donepezil affects you.**

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect is a concern to you.

### Other Medication

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following:

- ketoconazole
- rifampicin
- dexamethasone
- ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen (or any other pain-killer from the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) group)

If you have an operation, donepezil may affect the amount of anaesthetic you might need. Please discuss this with your surgeon, anaesthetist or dentist if you are due for surgery or dental treatment.

### Other Information

Tell your doctor if you have any of the following **medical conditions**, as you might not be able to take donepezil:

- If you have problems with your liver
- If you have a heart condition, such as an irregular heartbeat
- If you have a history of stomach ulcers
- If you have a history of asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD)
- If you have problems passing urine (peeing)
- If you have ever had seizures or convulsions

It may take several weeks for your medicine to take effect, so do not be discouraged if you do not see an improvement straight away.

### Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**