

# Quetiapine

## Information sheet for GPs

Quetiapine is indicated for the treatment of schizophrenia and is available as 25mg, 100mg and 200mg film-coated tablets. It is one of the agents of choice in patients with hyperprolactinaemia.

### Dose Regimen

- Quetiapine should be administered twice daily.
- The initial dose should be titrated upwards slowly starting with 25mg twice daily on day 1, 50mg twice daily on day 2, 100mg twice daily on day 3 and 150mg twice daily on day 4.
- From day 4 onward, the dose should be titrated to the usual effective dose range of 300 to 450mg per day .
- Depending on the clinical response and tolerability of the individual patient the dose may be adjusted within the range 150mg to 750mg per day.
- Elderly patients and patients with hepatic or renal impairment should be started on 25mg per day and increased daily by 25 to 50mg increments to an effective dose.

### Monitoring

Baseline (carried out by consultant):

- Blood pressure
- U&Es
- FBC
- LFTs
- Weight
- TFTs

Continuation monitoring (carried out by GP / consultant):

- Blood pressure – frequently during initiation
- U&Es – 3-6 monthly
- FBC- 3-6 monthly
- LFTs – monthly for 3 months
- Weight – as needed
- Creatinine phosphokinase – if Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome suspected
- TFTs – 3 monthly

### Side Effects

- Tardive dyskinesia
- Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS)
- Somnolence / Drowsiness
- Constipation
- Dry mouth

### Action

Refer to consultant.  
A reduction in dose, discontinuation or change to an alternative (atypical) antipsychotic maybe required.  
Review use of anticholinergics in patient – may worsen symptoms.  
Discontinue antipsychotic(s).  
Refer to consultant.  
Give a smaller dose in the morning or during the day.  
Patients should be advised not to drive or operate machinery.  
Recommend a high fibre diet.  
Consider adding a bulk-forming and /or stimulant laxative.  
Recommend chewing sugar-free gum.  
Consider prescribing artificial saliva e.g. glandosane.

Please consult the manufacturer's Data Sheet or Summary or Product Characteristics for further information

## Side Effects

- Orthostatic hypotension / dizziness (more common in elderly)
- Weight gain
- Dyspepsia
- Liver abnormalities / liver enzyme abnormalities
- Tachycardia and syncope during initial dosing, prolongation of QTc interval, hypertension
- Leucopenia, neutropenia, eosinophilia

### OTHERS

Anxiety, elevated plasma triglycerides and cholesterol, reduced plasma thyroid hormone concentrations, fever, rash

## Action

Initiate slowly.  
Advise patient to take time to stand up.  
Advise patient not to drive.  
Encourage a healthy balanced diet and regular exercise.  
Refer to a dietician if appropriate.  
Take after food.  
Refer to consultant  
Refer to consultant  
Refer to consultant

*Ask about side effects at every consultation*

## Contraindications

- Hypersensitivity to any ingredient
- Breast feeding

## Cautions

- Elderly
- Patient with hepatic and renal impairment
- Patients with cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease or other conditions predisposing to hypotension
- Patients with a history of seizures.
- Drugs known to prolong the QTc interval
- Pregnancy

## Drug Interactions

- Drugs known to prolong the QTc interval
- Other centrally acting drugs and alcohol
- Phenytoin, carbamazepine, barbiturates, thioridazine and rifampicin increase the clearance of Quetiapine so increased doses may be required if these agents are initiated and reduced if they are withdrawn.
- Ketoconazole and erythromycin: caution, possible arrhythmia's

### References

Summary of product characteristics 1999-2000  
BNF 40

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