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Clonidine

Information for parents

Feedback

We welcome any suggestions you have, please send your **comments, concerns, complaints and compliments** to: **The PALS, Complaints & Incidents Team**, Trust Headquarters Redesmere, Countess of Chester Health Park, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1BQ.

For more information see www.cwps.nhs.uk

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Introduction

This leaflet is to give you information about clonidine which has been prescribed or recommended for your child. It should be read together with the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with the medicine and the Choice and Medication leaflet for clonidine available on the CWP website (www.cwp.nhs.uk)

Why has my child been prescribed clonidine?

Clonidine is used in children as part of the treatment of tic disorders, it may also be used in the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

It is particularly useful in ADHD when this is associated with a marked tic disorder or when previous medicines such as methylphenidate have made the tics worse.

It is also used occasionally in higher doses for high blood pressure.

Why are these uses not in the manufacturer's leaflet?

Clonidine was originally used to treat high blood pressure and this is its licensed use. However, there is much research and clinical evidence that it can be of substantial benefit for the range of behaviours described above.

Your doctor may suggest prescribing clonidine if they think that this would be the best medicine for your child, for example because of other medical conditions your child has.

A doctor can prescribe off-licence or 'off-label' drugs. A leaflet about this is available. Please ask your doctor or pharmacist if you would like further information.

What dose will my child take?

Doses vary depending on what is being treated, your doctor will advise you on the correct dose for your child. The dose starts very low, just one 25 microgram tablet a day, and is built up gradually to 100-200 micrograms. The final dose will depend on response and side effects, the maximum dose is 300 micrograms per day.

How long will it take to work?

Some immediate effects are seen but usually there is also a slow improvement over a month or so.

How long does my child need to take it for?

Clonidine should not be stopped suddenly as withdrawal symptoms such as high blood pressure, restlessness, anxiety, tremor, palpitations, abdominal or muscle pain may occur.

Improvements are only maintained while the medicine is being taken regularly. However, the hope is always that by enhancing the benefits of psychological and educational approaches, it will become more likely that your child will not need clonidine in the future.

What side effects does clonidine have?

More commonly reported side effects

Drowsiness or sedation, dizziness on standing (due to low blood pressure), dry mouth.

Less commonly reported side effects

Headache, nausea or vomiting, constipation, weakness or fatigue, restlessness at night or vivid dreams, low mood.

There are some other, much less common, side effects and these are listed on the leaflet which comes with the medicine.

What monitoring is needed?

Before your child starts clonidine they will have their blood pressure and pulse measured. If there is any family history of heart disease the doctor may recommend an ECG.

Your child's blood pressure and pulse will be monitored while the dose is being increased. If your child suffers breathlessness, dizziness or fainting while on clonidine it is important to let your doctor know.

People who access our services are welcome to talk to the Team Manager if they are experiencing any problems with their care.