Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

Flunarizine

Flunarizine is a type of drug known as a calcium channel blocker. Calcium channel blockers are medicines that are most often used to reduce blood pressure or treat certain heart conditions. Flunarizine is not licensed in the UK, and so its use for preventing migraine is 'unlicensed'. (While flunarizine is unlicensed in the UK, it is licensed in other countries, including Ireland, for the prevention of migraine in adults aged 18 years and older.)

To try and prevent migraine in adults, flunarizine 5 mg or 10 mg is usually taken once a day (at night). After flunarizine has been taken for a while, it may be recommended that people have 2 successive 'tablet-free' days each week, such as Saturday and Sunday. After 6 months of taking flunarizine a complete break from taking it is often recommended. It may be restarted if the migraines get worse again during this 6 month period.

Flunarizine should not be taken by people with depression or by people with Parkinson's disease or movement disorders. Weight gain is a very common side effect with flunarizine, which can affect about 10 in every 100 people taking it. Other possible side effects include a blocked or runny nose, increased appetite, depression, not being able to sleep or sleeping too much, constipation, stomach discomfort, feeling sick, muscle pain, menstruation problems, breast pain or tiredness. These side effects can affect between about 1 to 10 of every 100 people taking flunarizine.

For more information: Nice Guidance: Migraine prophylaxis: flunarizine. Evidence summary [ESUOM33] (https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/esuom33/chapter/Full-evidence-summary

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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