Cetirizine - Use | Dosage | Side Effects

Cetirizine is a powerful, selective blocker of histamine H1 receptor and is used to relieve symptoms of allergic rhinitis, allergic conjunctivitis and chronic idiopathic urticaria. It also exhibits low anticholinergic activity, because of which dry mouth occurs as a most common side effect of this drug.

Precautions

Cetirizine is one of the drugs that rarely cause side effects, and if it cause some, they tend to be mild and transient. For this reason, if applied in recommended doses it rarely causes side effects.

The only contraindication is hypersensitivity to the drug.

Cetirizine should not be used in patients with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance less than 10 mL / min) because Cetirizine is eliminated by the kidneys. Patients with impaired renal function are more prone to the accumulation of this drug in the blood, as the kidneys are not able to remove this medication from the body.

It should be applied with caution in patients who have partial or generalized tonic-clonic seizures (epilepsy).

There have been reports of Cetirizine-induced cholestasis1, and if you experience symptoms, such as: generalized pruritus (itching all over the body), jaundice, dark urine or light-colored stools, contact your doctor immediately because these are typical signs of cholestasis.
Two cases of Cetirizine-induced dystonia (involuntary muscle contractions) have been reported. This side effect quickly disappears after discontinuation of therapy.²

Cetirizine, pregnancy and breastfeeding

Animal studies do not indicate direct or indirect harmful effects of Cetirizine with respect to pregnancy, prenatal development, labor and postnatal development, which is why the FDA has classified this medication in the group B. There is currently no sufficient data on its use during human pregnancy.

The manufacturer of this drug recommends avoiding the use of this drug during breastfeeding, because a certain amount of this drug is excreted into human milk.

Dosage

The usual dose in patients older than 12 years is 10 mg once daily, preferably at bedtime.

In children aged 6-12 years, recommended dose is 5 mg twice daily (in the morning and in the evening).

Overdose

Symptoms of Cetirizine overdose are:

- Confusion
- Dry mouth
- Urinary retention
- Increased heart rate
- Mydriasis
- Drowsiness
- Lassitude

In case of an overdose, gastric lavage should be performed and patients should be provided with supportive and symptomatic treatment. There is no specific antidote for Cetirizine overdose. Dialysis is not effective for the treatment of Cetirizine overdose because this drug binds to plasma proteins in a high percentage.

Interactions

Cetirizine does not enter into clinically significant (major) interactions with other drugs or food.

Undesirable effects

Undesirable effects of Cetirizine include:

- Somnolence
- Drowsiness
- Fainting
- Sedation
• Confusion
• Headache
• Dry mouth
• Urinary retention
• Rapid heart rate
• Mydriasis
• Blurred vision
• Nausea
• Vomiting
• Diarrhea
• High plasma bilirubin
• Elevated liver enzymes
• Pharyngitis
• Thrombocytopenia (occurs very rarely)
• Paresthesia
• Dysuria
• Weight gain

References
1. NCBI link 1
2. NCBI link 2