Oxcarbazepine - Use | Dose | Side Effects

Oxcarbazepine is an antiepileptic drug whose mechanism of action is primarily based on the blockade of voltage-sensitive sodium channels. Effects on potassium channels are also important.\(^1\) It is mostly used for the treatment of:

- Partial epilepsy in adults and children (\textit{it is considered as first line treatment})\(^2\)
- Paroxysmal kinesigenic dyskinesia. One study on four children with paroxysmal kinesigenic dyskinesia has shown that complete resolution of symptoms can be achieved by using this drug.\(^3\)
- Secondary generalized tonic-clonic seizures

**Warnings**

Oxcarbazepine may lead to hyponatremia (\textit{low sodium levels}) which may cause following adverse effects: muscle spasms, muscle weakness, fatigue, nausea and headache. Visit your doctor if you get any of these symptoms. Because it decreases sodium levels, it should not be used in patients with hyponatremia.

You must inform your doctor if you suffer from depression or psychosis, because use of oxcarbazepine in these patients is contraindicated.

This medication may cause a syndrome known as Stevens-Johnson syndrome. Stevens-Johnson syndrome is a very serious skin disorder. Visit your doctor if you have any skin changes.

Safety and efficacy of this drug is not established in children under the age of 2.
Abruptly discontinuation of this medicine should be avoided, because your seizures may get worse.

**Oxcarbazepine therapy in pregnant woman and breastfeeding mothers**

Although there are not enough data to support use of oxcarbazepine during pregnancy, one study have reported one patient treated with this drug with no side effects neither during or after pregnancy. However, you cannot start taking Oxcarbazepine during pregnancy without consulting your doctor first.

Oxcarbazepine may penetrate into breast milk, but in small amounts. Consult your doctor before you start taking Oxcarbazepine during lactation.

**Dosage information**

Usual initial dose is 600 mg or 8-10 mg/kg of body weight per day divided into two doses. Maintenance dose is 600-2400 mg per day. Swallow the tablet whole with or without a meal.

**What medications should you avoid**

This drug has shown low potential for interactions. However, below listed medicines should not be concomitantly taken with Oxcarbazepine:

- Contraceptives (e.g. levonorgestrel). Oxcarbazepine may lower effects of contraceptives. You need to use alternative contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancy.
- Selegiline, rasagiline and other inhibitors of monoamino oxydase
- Buprenorphine
- Painkillers (*paracetamol, ibuprofen and fentanyl others*)
- Dolutegravir
- Furazolidone

Above listed medications are not the only one that may interact with oxcarbazepine. Tell your doctor what medications you are taking, including herbal remedies.

**Side effects**

Adverse effects of Oxcarbazepine include:

- Vision changes, such as blurred vision
- Disorientation
- Memory loss
- Low sodium levels
- Chills
- Irritability
- Ear infection
- Nose infection
- Throat infection
- Viral infections
- Stomach upset
- Sleepiness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Mania
- Vaginitis
- Leucopenia and neutropenia
- Stevens-Johnson syndrome

Get medical help if you get any adverse effects.

References: