

# Amiodarone

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This leaflet has been produced to help patients prescribed Amiodarone understand more about their medicine. This is in addition to the standard manufacturer leaflet.

## What is Amiodarone?

Amiodarone is a medicine used to treat a fast or irregular heartbeat.

## How do I take the medicine?

You should take your Amiodarone as directed by the label on the box. It is usual to take a higher dose over the first one to two weeks to help the medicine to work properly.

The usual starting dose is one tablet (200mg) three times a day for one week, then one tablet (200mg) twice a day for one week then one tablet daily (200mg). You should take the tablets at the same time each day with a glass of water.

## What if I forget to take a tablet?

If you forget to take a tablet, take one as soon as you remember on the same day. If it is nearly time for your next tablet take that one as usual and do not take the one you have missed.

## What are the side-effects of Amiodarone?

Amiodarone is a really effective medicine and like any other medicine does have some side-effects:

### Skin

Amiodarone can cause your skin to become more sensitive to the sun when you are taking the medication and for a few weeks after you stop.

Avoid direct sunlight on your skin and do not use sunbeds. You can prevent this by using a total sun block, wearing a sun hat and keeping your arms and legs covered in the sun.

Amiodarone can also cause the skin to take on a greyish/blue tinge but this will settle when you stop taking the medication.



## Thyroid

Amiodarone can affect the thyroid by either making it overactive or underactive. If you experience any signs of extreme tiredness or restlessness it is important to see your doctor. Your doctor will also monitor your thyroid function before starting Amiodarone and then every six months with a blood test.

## Liver

Amiodarone can also cause problems with the function of your liver, but this is very rare. Your doctor will check this before you start treatment and every six months with a routine blood test. Tell your doctor if you experience any signs of liver problems such as yellow discolouration of skin or mucous membranes, itchy skin, nausea and vomiting.

## Lungs

Amiodarone can cause lung problems, but this is very rare. Please see your GP immediately if you become short of breath or develop a persistent cough. Patients are often given a chest xray prior to starting amiodarone and pulmonary function tests are often arranged early on in the start of therapy should your physician consider these are needed.

## Eyes

Small deposits can form in the cornea of the eye. These deposits are not harmful and usually go away when you stop the medication. This does not affect your daytime vision but you might be dazzled by bright lights at night. Some patients also notice a bluish halo around their vision, this is not harmful, but if there is any impairment in your vision you must see your doctor immediately. It is important to attend for a yearly eye test whilst on Amiodarone.

## Other side effects

Other side effects of Amiodarone are rare but include:

- A metallic taste in mouth.
- Pins and needles.
- Sleep disorders.

## **Interactions with other medicines**

Many medicines can interfere with how Amiodarone works. If you start or stop any medicines ensure you inform the doctor and the pharmacist.

You should also avoid grapefruit juice whilst taking Amiodarone as this can increase the amount of Amiodarone in your body.

## **Monitoring**

Your GP will monitor your treatment every six months and ensure you have blood tests for liver and thyroid function.

## **How should I store my medicine?**

Store in a cool dry place and keep out of sight and reach of children.

## **How long should I continue to take the Amiodarone tablets?**

You should continue taking the tablets for as long as they are prescribed by your doctor. You should make sure your medication is reviewed by your doctor on a regular basis and attend for your six monthly blood tests.

## **Where do I get more tablets when these are finished?**

You should be able to get more tablets from your GP. Make sure you get a new supply before the tablets run out.

## **What if I have any more questions about Amiodarone?**

If you need any more advice or information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

You can also call our Medicines Information Helpline, Monday to Friday 2-4pm, on Tel: 01302 553201.

## **Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)**

The team are available to help with any concerns, complaints or questions you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

### **The contact details are:**

**Telephone:** 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

**Email:** [dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net](mailto:dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net)