

Patient Information:

Clopidogrel tablets after a Stroke or 'Mini Stroke'



What is a stroke?

A **stroke** happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off and brain cells are damaged.

This blood flow reduction then leads to damage within the brain, causing a loss of function or stroke.

Strokes, are most commonly caused by a blood clot or other debris forming in an artery leading to the brain, which then causes a reduction or stoppage of blood supply to part of the brain. This type of stroke is called an **ischaemic stroke**. About 85% of strokes are ischaemic.

A transient ischaemic attack (**TIA**) or '**mini stroke**' happens when the flow of blood to the brain is only **temporarily** reduced, leading to the signs and symptoms of a stroke which then completely resolve. Having a TIA should be seen as warning sign, and **medical assistance should be sought immediately**.

Less commonly a stroke can be caused by a bleed in the brain leading to damage. This is known as a haemorrhagic stroke. Clopidogrel is not used to treat a haemorrhagic stroke. Your doctor will confirm which type of stroke you have had before starting treatment.

What is Clopidogrel?

Clopidogrel is a type of medicine called an antiplatelet: it reduces the risk of blood clots forming within your circulatory system or blood vessels.

Taking this medication can reduce your risk of having a stroke or Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) which is also sometimes called a mini stroke.

Clopidogrel can also help reducing the risk of blood clots forming in the other circulatory diseases, such as angina or heart attacks. It does not affect the health of the blood vessels or reverse damage to blood vessels.

How does Clopidogrel work?

Small cells in the blood called platelets cause your blood to form clots.

Normally, when there is damage to small blood vessels, the platelets detect it and produce a chemical that attracts other platelets causing them to stick together to form a blood clot. The blood clot forms to help cover and repair the damage until the blood vessel completely heals. Strokes often can occur when small clots within your circulation block or reduce the blood supply to your brain.

Clopidogrel reduces the ability of the platelets to stick together and reduces the risk of clots forming.

Why have I been prescribed Clopidogrel?

You have been advised by your doctor to take clopidogrel following a recent Ischaemic stroke or TIA (mini stroke) to try to reduce your risk of having another similar event. Research has shown

that taking clopidogrel, is more effective at preventing strokes, and has fewer side effects compared to other antiplatelet medicines such as aspirin and/or dipyridamole.

Clopidogrel is considered to be one of the most effective treatments to reduce your chances of having another stroke or TIA.

About Clopidogrel

Normal Dose: 75mgs (1Tablet) Once a day

The doctor who prescribed clopidogrel for you should have fully explained the dose and possible adverse effects that this tablet may have.

If you miss a dose **within** 12 hours of your regular time, please take that dose immediately. If you miss a dose **more than** 12 hours from your normal time, take the next dose at your regular time.

DO NOT DOUBLE THE DOSE.

Commonly reported side effects include;

Dyspepsia (indigestion), abdominal pain, diarrhoea, bleeding disorders, bruising and itchy skin. Always refer to the patient information leaflet enclosed with your tablets if you require more detailed information. Treatment with clopidogrel is usually for life, unless there are any reported problems.

Clopidogrel Licensing

In the UK, medicines must have a licence, also called a Marketing Authorisation (MA), before they are approved for treating patients.

The licence is confirmation that the medicine has been tested for safety and is of an appropriate quality. It also outlines what conditions the medicine is approved for use in, what the dose

should be and any precautions for its use.

The licence does not prevent a doctor from prescribing the medicine for other uses as long as the doctor is satisfied that it is effective and safe in those circumstances.

Currently clopidogrel is NOT licensed as a treatment following TIA, but it is considered a suitable and safe treatment option.

Taking clopidogrel for the treatment and prevention of ischaemic strokes and TIA is considered by National and Local stroke experts to be the **best treatment** currently available, and is supported in the National Stroke Guidelines (2012), produced by the Royal College of Physicians. These new guidelines take into account the **latest** clinical research evidence.

If you have any questions or concerns about the use of clopidogrel tablets, please do not hesitate to contact your **GP or local Pharmacist.**

Useful information links

For further information on stroke;

The Stroke Association
Stroke Association House,
240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR
Phone: 020 7566 0300
Text phone: 020 7251 9096
www.stroke.org.uk

Please remember to speak with your Hospital Consultant, local GP or Pharmacist, if you have any concerns in regard to your treatment or medication.

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