

Carbamazepine

Usage

Carbamazepine is an anti convulsant used to control seizures/fits. It is used for partial (focal) seizures. It must be prescribed by a doctor. You should never give your child anyone else's medications.

Side Effects

All medications have side effects. Not everyone will experience side effects. Below are some of the possible side effects your child may experience:

- **Rash** - This is the most important side effect to watch for. Rash can occur anytime but usually occurs within the first 4-6 weeks. There are important features to look for such as, your child may develop red eyes, red mouth, blisters around the mouth, nose and lips. If your child develops a rash or any of these symptoms please call your doctor immediately. The drug needs to be stopped immediately under medical supervision.
- **If you have Han Chinese background (higher proportions in Filipinos, Malaysians, South Asians, Indians and Thai) please let your doctor know, as this will increase your child's chances of getting this rash which is a serious side effect. A blood test can be done to determine potential risk.**

Other possible side effects

The below adverse effects may occur early and are often dose related. Speak to your doctor as dose adjustments may abolish the side effect.

- Tummy pain
- Nausea
- Unsteadiness
- Drowsiness
- Blurred vision
- Irritability
- Dizziness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Weight gain/ loss, loss of appetite
- Changes in behaviour
- Abnormal blood test

Can other medications be given with Carbamazepine?

- There are some drugs that are not compatible with Carbamazepine, particularly an antibiotic called **Erythromycin**, so always tell your doctor that your child is taking Carbamazepine.
- This is also important if you are giving your child herbal or complementary medicines. The doctor can check to make sure they are compatible.

Epilepsy and Pregnancy

- The oral contraceptive pill may not work properly in women or girls who are taking Carbamazepine.
- Any issues related to child bearing please refer to the PENNSW website: www.PENNSW.com.au.

What else do I need to Know?

- Carbamazepine can make some seizures worse (absence seizures and myoclonic seizures).
- If your child's seizures are becoming worse please contact your doctor.

Monitoring and Levels

- Carbamazepine is started slowly and then increased gradually until the right dose is achieved.
- Your doctor may do blood tests before your child starts the medication and may do blood tests occasionally to check the medication level in the blood.
- Discuss with your doctor the timing of the dosage in relation to the time of the blood test.
- Sometimes the doctor will change the dosage according to the medication level in the blood.