

# Clozapine and your health

## Important information for people taking Clozapine



### Getting further information and help

For more information, phone your local Community Mental Health Team:

- Rodney: (09) 247 0360
- North Shore: 487 1500
- Waitakere: 837 8837

Clozapine can be very helpful for the relief of distressing mental health symptoms. However the potential side effects can be serious.

Health professionals such as your family doctor, dentist, pharmacist or any other doctors, need to know that you are taking Clozapine so they can assess any health problems you have and choose the right medicine for you.

Please read this information carefully and keep it in mind while taking Clozapine.

### Things you need to know about Clozapine

#### Potential side effects and interactions with other substances

- **Clozapine can affect the production of white blood cells** which fight infection. At the first sign of infection (such as fever, cold or flu symptoms), you will need to contact your doctor or mental health worker for an urgent blood test to check your white blood cell levels.
- **Constipation from Clozapine can result in serious bowel damage.** Drink lots of water, exercise regularly, and eat fibre-filled foods such as porridge, bran, fruit and vegetables, brown rice and whole grain breads. If constipation becomes a problem, talk to your doctor, mental health worker, or pharmacist immediately.
- **Sudden changes in smoking or caffeine intake can affect how Clozapine works.** If you are making changes to your smoking or caffeine intake, talk to a doctor or mental health worker so your Clozapine levels can be checked.

#### Your details

If you are receiving health care, please give the health professionals the following information to ensure you receive the best care:

Notes:

Name: .....

Community Team: .....

NHI number: .....

Order via a Mental Health Pharmacist (xtn 2626)

## Further information:

If you need urgent information and support relating to a person's care with Clozapine outside office hours,

**phone 486 8900**

and ask to be connected to the Mental Health Crisis Team for your local area.

### A Clozapine Quick Reference sheet

is available under the Health Professionals section of the Waitemata DHB website:  
[www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/HealthProfessionals/Medicinesresources/](http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/HealthProfessionals/Medicinesresources/)

### A Clozapine datasheet

is available at:  
[www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/c/clopinetab.pdf](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/c/clopinetab.pdf)

**Important information for health professionals about Clozapine**



Clozapine can be very helpful for the relief of distressing mental health symptoms. However the potential side effects can be serious. Special care is needed when arranging any kind of medical treatment for people taking Clozapine, or when prescribing any other medications.

## Side effects and interactions with other medications

The possible side effects of Clozapine can include:

- Agranulocytosis
- Constipation
- Hypersalivation
- Metabolic disturbances
- Myocarditis and cardiomyopathy
- Epileptic seizures
- Nocturnal urinary incontinence

**Avoid prescribing medications with the potential to cause constipation.** Eating fibre-filled foods, drinking plenty of water and exercising will help reduce the risk. Active management with laxatives may also be needed on a regular basis.

**Take care when co-prescribing.** Some drugs raise or lower Clozapine's potency by their interaction with the liver. Sudden changes in smoking or caffeine intake may affect clozapine metabolism. Clozapine levels need to be monitored in these situations.

**Avoid prescribing drugs with the potential for bone marrow suppression** as Clozapine can affect the production of white blood cells resulting in agranulocytosis. An urgent blood test is needed to check WBC levels at the first sign of infection (such as fever or cold/flu symptoms).

**If you need to stop Clozapine suddenly because of a medical emergency** (such as myocarditis or agranulocytosis) please contact the Mental Health Team as mental distress may occur. Close monitoring is needed.