
Medications

A guide for you after spinal cord injury

Spinal Cord Injury
Regional Rehabilitation Program

This booklet is to help you learn about the medications that may help you. At the time of this printing the information was accurate to the best of our knowledge. The information in this booklet may change due to the rapid changes in health care. It is not intended to replace medical/health advice from your health care team.

© Hamilton Health Sciences, 2003.
Revised and reprinted 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011, and 2015

Table of Contents

	Page
Medications	1
Medications involved in reducing spasms.....	5
Medications to help stomach problems.....	13
Antibiotics to prevent or fight infection	21
Medication to prevent clotting problems with the blood.....	27
Medications for bowel function	31
Inhalers	39
Medications for neuropathic pain or nerve pain	47
Medication for osteoporosis.....	57
Medications listing – index.....	62

Medications

The injury to your spinal cord not only changes some of the ways your body works, but it also puts you at a higher risk for some problems. This book provides basic information about some medications commonly used after spinal cord injury.

The purpose of your medications might be:

- treatment of a problem, such as an infection
- reducing the risk for problems, such as osteoporosis
- reducing abnormal function, such as spasticity

What you should know about the medications you are taking:

- The name of the medication.
- Why you are taking the medication.
- How long you should take the medication.
- The dosage – how much of the medication you should take each time.
- How and when to take it – such as with food, on an empty stomach, and the correct way to take them, and what to do if you miss a dose.
- Side effects that may occur. Please tell your doctor if you notice any side effects.
- Any precautions that you need to be aware of that some drugs may cause, such as feeling drowsy.
- Where you should store or keep your medication.

Please talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your medications before you:

- stop them
- change when you take them
- increase or decrease the amount you take
- start another medication, even one you have taken before

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant, or think you might be pregnant, check with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before taking any medications.

Alcohol and medications

Alcohol can interfere with many medications and conditions. Some of the things that alcohol can do when mixed with certain medications include:

- an increase in drowsiness
- cause bleeding of the stomach
- upset the stomach
- cause hot flash like symptoms
- cause the medication not to work the way it should

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about drinking alcohol when starting a new medication or reviewing your present medications.

Non-prescription medications, homeopathic and herbal medications

You may use non-prescription medications, homeopathic and herbal medications, it is important to ask your pharmacist about drug interactions between your medications and these products.

Examples of some interactions include:

- Ginkgo Biloba interacts with Warfarin
- St. John's Wort interacts with many anti-depressant or mood enhancing drugs
- decongestants which are medications to relieve a stuffy nose interact with blood pressure medications.

Safety tips

Always ask your pharmacist or doctor before taking any new medication, including homeopathic, non-prescription or over-the-counter medication.

- ✓ Carry a list of your medications, dosages and your allergies, in your wallet or purse.
- ✓ If you think you may be pregnant, check with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before using any medication.

If you have a break from your rehabilitation program for more than 3 days, you will need to get your prescriptions filled in your pharmacy. Your doctor will give you written prescriptions or you may request that the prescriptions are sent directly to your pharmacy.

Your pharmacy

It is helpful to both your pharmacist and doctor if you use just one pharmacy. This helps the doctors who are writing out your prescriptions. Also, your pharmacist gets to know you, and your usual prescriptions.

Paying for medications

You may have an insurance plan that covers the cost of medications. If you have questions about your insurance or other options to help with the cost of your medications, ask your social worker in the rehabilitation program.

Some medications are covered (paid for) by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program (ODB).

Some medications are covered in certain situations – Limited Use Code (LUC).

Over-the-counter medications can be bought without a doctor's prescription. Most are not covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Medications involved in reducing spasms

Name: Baclofen (BAK-loe-fen)

Brand name: Lioresal

Strength	10mg or 20mg tablets
Use	Used to help relax muscles in your body and relieve spasms and cramping.
Dose	5mg to 20mg taken 3 or 4 times a day. As determined by your doctor. You can take up to 80mg a day. Dose is started at 5mg 3 times a day. The dose is increased by 5mg per dose every 3 days until spasticity is controlled.
How to take	Do not suddenly stop taking this medicine. This may cause hallucinations or seizures. Check with your doctor for the best way to slowly reduce the amount you are taking before stopping. Take with food or milk to avoid an upset stomach.
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drowsiness, fatigue, weakness, nausea, dizziness.• If you have diabetes you may notice an increase in blood sugar levels. Check your blood sugar and tell your doctor of any changes.
Precautions	This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Oxybutynin (ox-i-BYOO-ti-nin)

Brand name: Ditropan

Strength	5mg tablets or liquid
Use	Helps to decrease muscle spasms of the bladder and the frequent urge to urinate caused by these spasms.
Dose	Determined by your doctor.
How to take	Take this medication on an empty stomach with water. You may need to take it with food or milk to lessen stomach upset.
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dry mouth, your eyes may become more light sensitive, blurred vision, drowsiness, nausea, and constipation.• You may sweat less, this causes your body temperature to rise. Therefore, use extra care not to become overheated while you are taking this medication.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.• This medication will also reduce the amount of saliva you produce. You can help protect yourself from cavities by rinsing your mouth with water after meals. You may also wish to make more regular visits with your dentist.
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 mg tablets and liquid covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program.• Ditropan XL is long-acting and taken once a day. It is not covered.

Name: Tolterodine (TOLE-tear-oh-deen)

Brand name: Detrol

Strength	1mg and 2mg tablets
Use	For the treatment of urinary incontinence, which is when you cannot control your bladder. Also used if you can't control the urge to go, or if you need to go too many times. It works by stopping abnormal bladder contractions or spasms.
Dose	Usually start with 2mg twice daily. May decrease to 1mg twice daily. Can take up to 2 weeks to see results plus up to 8 weeks for further improvement. Detrol LA can be taken once a day.
How to take	Can be taken with or without food.
Side effects	Dry mouth/eyes, dizziness, difficulty in urination, constipation, headaches.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program with Limited Use Code.

Name: Dantrolene (DAN-troe-leen)

Brand name: Sodium Dantrium

Strength	25mg and 100mg capsules
Use	To relax muscle and help control muscle spasticity resulting from spinal cord injury.
Dose	25mg to 100mg up to 4 times a day.
How to take	Take as your doctor prescribed. It can take a few weeks to work.
Side effects	Drowsiness, weakness, fatigue, dizziness or stomach upset may occur.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid too much direct sunlight because increased sunburn may occur.• This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.• Your bloodwork must be checked regularly when you are taking this medication.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Diazepam (dye-aZ-eh-pam)

Brand name: Valium, Vivol, Apo Diazepam

Strength	2mg, 5mg and 10mg tablets, also in a liquid.
Use	Relieves anxiety, relaxes muscle and is also used as a sedative.
Dose	According to the your needs. 2mg to 10mg taken 2 to 4 times a day.
How to take	May take with or without food.
Side effects	Drowsiness, dizziness and weakness are commonly seen in the first few days of treatment. Contact your doctor if these feelings persist.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.• Drug dependence may develop.
Coverage	The generic version is covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The liquid version is not covered.

Name: Clonidine (KLON-in-deen)

Brand name: Dixarit, Catapres, Apo-Clonidine

Strength	0.025mg, 0.1mg and 0.2mg tablets
Use	Usually given as an add on treatment when Baclofen fails to work alone. Is also used for blood pressure control.
Dose	0.05mg to 0.4mg a day. Usual dose .05mg to 0.1mg 2 times a day.
How to take	May take with food or milk.
Side effects	<p>This medication is also used to treat blood pressure. You may feel dizziness or lightheaded when changing positions. Sit up slowly from a lying position.</p> <p>May also cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• dry mouth• drowsiness• constipation
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid drinking alcohol or taking other medicines that cause drowsiness such as sleeping pills, allergy medicine, narcotic painkillers or antidepressants without first asking your doctor or pharmacist.• Do not stop taking drug suddenly. Drug must be tapered down slowly to prevent a dangerous and rapid rise in blood pressure.
Coverage	<p>Ontario Drug Benefit Program.</p> <p>The 0.025mg tablets are not covered (generic or brand name).</p>

Name: Tizanidine (tye-ZAN-i-dine)

Brand name: Zanaflex

Strength	4mg tablet.
Use	To help control muscle spasms.
Dose	Individual; start with 2mg to 4mg daily and increase by 2 to 4mg every 2 to 4 days. Maximum dose is 36mg a day.
How to take	May be taken with food.
Side effects	Drowsiness, dry mouth, dizziness, muscle weakness, lowering of blood pressure. Changes in liver enzymes.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.• Liver function tests should be done before starting and then at 1, 3, and 6 months after starting.
Coverage	Not covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Medications to help stomach problems

Name: Ranitidine (ra-NIT-ih-deen)

Brand name: Zantac

Strength	150mg and 300mg tablets. 150 mg tablet is an over-the-counter medication. You do not need a prescription. Available in a liquid.
Use	Ranitidine is used to treat and prevent ulcers. It works by decreasing the amount of excess acid made in the stomach. It is used in reflux esophagitis.
Dose	150mg to 300mg a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take this medicine for the full course of treatment even if you feel better.• If taking one dose a day, take at bedtime.• If taking twice a day, take in the morning and at bedtime.
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache, fatigue, constipation, diarrhea.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid foods and drinks that irritate the stomach such as caffeine, chocolate, fatty or spicy foods, alcohol.• Avoid cigarettes and alcohol as they affect the stomach's nighttime production of acid.
Coverage	Both strengths and liquid are covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Lansoprazole (lanz-OP-ra-zol)

Brand name: Prevacid

Strength	15mg and 30mg delayed release capsules.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To treat ulcers caused by the bacteria H. Pylori, or caused by medicines being taken for pain and joint problems.• To treat reflux esophagitis which is tissue damage caused by the stomach contents flowing back up the food pipe.• To treat severe heartburn - it works by reducing the amount of acid made in your stomach.
Dose	15mg to 30mg once a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take Lansoprazole with water, before breakfast.• Swallow whole or sprinkle contents on a spoonful of soft food such as apple sauce.
Side effects	Diarrhea, headache, abdominal pain.
Precautions	Avoid drinking alcohol or smoking as these can increase your stomach acid.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program with Limited Use Code. Available in the hospital as fast tabs (melt on tongue). Available for patients who cannot swallow whole pills.

Name: Pantoprazole (pan-TOE-pra-zole)

Brand name: Pantoloc

Strength	40mg tablets
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treatment and healing of esophagitis. Esophagitis is the inflammation and ulcers of the esophagus which is caused by acid moving backwards from the stomach.• In combination with other medications to treat ulcers caused by the bacteria H. Pylori.• Treat or prevent ulcers caused by taking NSAIDS. NSAIDS are a group of medications used for joint pain and inflammation, such as Aspirin or Naprosyn.• Control heartburn in GERD. GERD is gastroesophageal reflux disease.
Dose	40mg to 80mg a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take Pantaprazole whole, in the morning, with or without food.• May be taken with antacids.
Side effects	Diarrhea, headache, dizziness, pruritus (itchy skin).
Precautions	Avoid drinking alcohol or smoking as this can increase your stomach acid.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program with Limited Use Code.

Name: Misoprostol (my-so-PROST-all)

Brand name: Cytotec

Strength	100mcg and 200mcg tablets.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps to protect the stomach from ulcers that can be caused by anti-inflammatory drugs such as Aspirin or Naprosyn.• Protects the stomach from acid.
Dose	Up to 800mcg daily. Usually 200mcg 4 times a day.
How to take	Take with food or right after a meal.
Side effects	Diarrhea, stomach cramps, gas, headache.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not take with magnesium containing antacids. If you need an antacid, use an aluminum based one such as Amphojel.• Do not take if you are pregnant as it can cause a miscarriage.• Do not take if breastfeeding.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Sucralfate (soo-KRAL-fate)

Brand name: Sulcrate

Strength	1gm tablets or in a liquid.
Use	Sucralfate is used to treat or prevent a stomach ulcer. It forms a coating over the stomach or ulcer to protect it from acid.
Dose	1 tablet or 5ml of liquid — 4 times a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take this medicine on an empty stomach 1 hour before meals or 2 hours after meals with a glass of water.• Antacids may be taken with Sucralfate to help relieve pain; but not within 30 minutes before or 1 hour after taking Sucralfate.• Although pain and ulcer symptoms may stop within the first few weeks of using this medicine, it is important that you finish all the medicines to allow complete healing.
Side effects	The most frequent side effect is constipation.
Precautions	Separate Sucralfate at least 2 hours from other medications.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Metoclopramide (met-oh-kloe-PRA-mide)

Brand name: Reglan, Maxeran

Strength	5mg and 10mg tablets, and liquid.
Use	Increase the movement and contractions of your stomach and intestines. Also relieves symptoms of nausea, vomiting and heartburn caused by a problem called gastroparesis.
Dose	5mg to 10mg taken 3 or 4 times a day.
How to take	Take this medicine 30 minutes before meals and at bedtime unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
Side effects	Drowsiness, restlessness, unusual tiredness or weakness, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, abdominal discomfort.
Precautions	This medication will add to the effects of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers and allergy and hay fever medicines, by slowing down the central nervous system and causing drowsiness.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Domperidone (dom-PER-i-done)

Brand name: Motilium

Strength	10mg tablets.
Use	Increases the movement and contractions of your stomach and intestines. Relieves the symptoms of nausea, vomiting and/or pain associated with indigestion after eating.
Dose	10mg taken 3 times a day. Do not take more than 3 times a day.
How to take	Take this medicine 15 to 30 minutes before meals and at bedtime unless otherwise directed.
Side effects	Stomach cramps, diarrhea, constipation or nausea, drowsiness, fatigue.
Precautions	<p>If you are using antacid preparations, ranitidine, famotidine, cimetidine or omeprazole, do not take Domperidone within 1 hour.</p> <p>If you have a heart condition, please check your doctor or pharmacist before taking this medication.</p>
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Antibiotics to prevent or fight infection

Name: Sulfamethoxazole – Trimethoprim (TMP / SMX)

Brand name: Septra, Septra DS, Bactrim,
Bactrim DS, Apo- Sulfatrim

Strength	This medication is a combination of two drugs, a sulfa methoxazole and trimethoprim. It is available in the standard combination tablet or in a double strength (DS) tablet. It is also available in liquid form.
Use	To treat infections. Used often for a urinary tract infection and upper respiratory infections.
Dose	1 or 2 regular tablets 2 times a day or 1 double strength tablet 2 times a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is best taken with a full glass of water on an empty stomach 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals. Drink several glasses of water every day.• To clear up your infection completely, keep taking this medicine for the full time of treatment, even if you begin to feel better after a few days. Do not miss any doses.• The liquid form should be shaken well before each use. Do not put in fridge.• Do not take if allergic to Sulpha.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Sulfamethoxazole – Trimethoprim (continued)

Side effects	Skin rash and upset stomach are common. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. If severe or if it persists for longer than 2 days, contact your doctor.
Precautions	Your skin will be more sensitive to the sun's rays. Avoid direct sunlight or long exposure to the sun. Wear a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to prevent sunburn.

Name: Nitrofurantoin (nye-troe-fyoor-AN-toyn)

Brand name: Macrochantin, Nitrofurantoin, MacroBid

Strength	50mg and 100mg tablets or capsules
Use	Nitrofurantoin is used to eliminate bacteria that causes certain kinds of infection of the bladder and kidneys. This drug may also be used in one daily dose to prevent bladder infection.
Dose	Individualized to the patient.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is best taken with food or milk. This may lessen stomach upset and help your body absorb the medicine better.• To clear up your infection completely, keep taking this medicine for the full time of treatment, even if you begin to feel better after a few days.• Do not miss any doses.
Side effects	Upset stomach, brown urine, dizziness, drowsiness. May discolour urine to dark yellow or brown colour.
Precautions	Diabetics - this medicine may cause false test results with some urine sugar tests. Check with your doctor before you change your diet or the dose of your diabetes medication.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Amoxicillin (a-mox-I-sil'-in)

Strength	250mg and 500mg capsule - also available in a liquid
Use	Used to treat infections.
Dose	According to your doctor's directions – usually 250mg to 500mg 3 times a day.
How to take	<p>Can be taken with or without food.</p> <p>To clear up your infection completely, keep taking this medication for the full time of treatment, even if you begin to feel better after a few days. Do not miss any doses.</p> <p>Do not take if allergic to Penicillin.</p>
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you experience a rash, shortness of breath, itching or hives, stop taking the drug and contact your doctor.• You may experience diarrhea, nausea or vomiting – if it is severe or lasts for more than 2 days, contact your doctor.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Ciprofloxacin (sip-roe-FLOX-a-sin)

Brand name: Cipro

Strength	250mg, 500mg and 750mg tablets.
Use	It is taken by mouth and used to treat infections.
Dose	Usually 250mg to 750mg — twice a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually taken for 7 to 14 days. Do not skip a dose and take until finished.• Can be taken with meals (non-dairy).• Do not take within 2 hours of taking any food or medication that contains a mineral such as antacids, dairy products, calcium, iron, zinc, multivitamins with minerals, or with the drug sucralfate. This will interfere with the absorption of the drug.• Drink lots of water or fluids when on this medication.
Side effects	Nausea and diarrhea are the most frequent.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid excess caffeine (caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate and coke) as the drug reduces the metabolism of caffeine and can interfere with your sleep. It is best to take the drug in the morning.• Will increase the skin's sun sensitivity. Avoid direct or long exposure to the sun, and use a sunscreen of at least SPF 30.• May increase the effect of oral blood thinners, such as Warfarin. You will need to have your blood clotting times checked.• May interfere with blood sugar. You may need to check your blood sugar level.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program with Limited Use Code.

Name: Levofloxacin (lee-voh-FLOKS-a-sin)

Brand name: Levaquin

Strength	250mg and 500mg tablets.
Use	To treat infection caused by bacteria.
Dose	250mg to 750mg a day.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually taken for 7 to 14 days. Do not skip a dose and take until finished.• Can be taken with meals (non-dairy).• Do not take within 2 hours of taking any food or medication that contains a mineral such as antacids, dairy products, calcium, iron, zinc, multivitamins with minerals, or with the drug sucralfate. This will interfere with the absorption of the drug.• Drink lots of water or fluids when on this medication.
Side effects	Nausea, diarrhea and headache are most common.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid excess caffeine (caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate and coke) as the drug reduces the metabolism of caffeine and can interfere with your sleep. It is best to take the drug in the morning.• Will increase the skin's sun sensitivity. Avoid direct or long exposure to the sun, and use a sunscreen of at least SPF 30.• May increase the effect of oral blood thinners, such as Warfarin. You will need to have your blood clotting times checked.• May interfere with blood sugar. You may need to check your blood sugar level.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program with Limited Use Code.

Medications to prevent clotting problems with the blood

Name: Warfarin (war'-far-in)

Brand name: Coumadin

Strength	1mg (pink), 2mg (lavender), 2.5mg (green), 3 mg (tan), 4mg (blue), 5mg (peach), 6mg (teal), 7.5mg (yellow), 10mg (white).
Use	This decreases the clotting ability of the blood and helps prevent harmful clots from forming in the blood vessels. It is often called a blood thinner.
Dose	Individualized to the patient.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As long as you are taking Warfarin, regular blood tests will be done to decide if your dose should be changed. If you do not have these tests, you could have clotting problems with your blood.• Your doctor knows how often you should take this medication. Do not change your daily dose unless your doctor tells you to.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The 6 mg and 7.5 mg pills are not covered and a substitute may be used in the community.

Name: Warfarin (continued)

How to take (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is best to take the medicine at the same time every day. You may notice some nausea or discomfort, but this will be mild and will pass as you become used to the medicine.• If you forget a dose at your usual time, take it as soon as you remember. If you remember the next day, take only that dose scheduled for that day. Do not take a double dose.
Side effects	Bruising or bleeding such as nose bleeds, bleeding gums, or blood in stools may happen if the dose is too high. Contact your doctor right away if either of these problems happen.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell all doctors and dentists providing care for you that you are taking Warfarin.• Do not stop or start taking any medication (herbal, non-prescription and prescription) without the permission of your doctor who prescribes you the Warfarin.• Leafy green vegetables may also affect how this medication works. Do not change the amount that you normally eat on a daily basis.• Drinking too much alcohol may change the way Warfarin affects your body. You should not drink on a daily basis or no more than 1 or 2 drinks at a time. Some over-the-counter medications such as aspirin preparations, cough-cold preparations and antacids may change Warfarin's effect. Be certain to talk with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medication that is not prescribed such as 222's, Alka-Seltzer, Bufferin, Anacin or Excedrin.

Name: Dalteparin (dal-TE-pa-rin)

Brand name: Fragmin

Strength	Prefilled syringes of 2500 units or 5000 units. Other individual strengths made in pharmacy.
Use	To prevent blood clots from forming in the vessels. Also treats the formation of blood clots deep in veins.
Dose	Individualized to the patient. Injected underneath the surface of the skin.
How to use	You must use Dalteparin as instructed by your doctor.
Side effects	Contact your doctor if you notice bleeding at the injection site, easy bruising or bruising without cause, other bleeding from nose, mouth, anus, vagina or urine.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the instructions of your doctor carefully.• Do not take any drugs other than those prescribed by your doctor, while you are treated with Dalteparin.• Tell any other doctor or dentist who treats you that you are using Dalteparin.• Do not take if you have serious kidney problems.
Coverage	Not covered for prevention of blood clots (DVTs); only covered during treatment of blood clots. Limited Use Code.

Medications for bowel function

In addition to taking these types of medications, eat lots of fibre and drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquid per day, if not on fluid restrictions.

Stool Softeners

Name: Docusate Sodium (doc-CUE-sayt SOE-dee-um)
Colace, Regulex and
Docusate Calcium (doc-CUE-sayt KAL-see-um)
Surfak

Strength	Colace - 100mg capsules. Surfak - 240mg capsules.
Use	Softens the stool so it is easier to pass. May take 1 or 2 days for this drug to work to its full effect.
Dose	Colace - 100mg to 200mg up to 3 times a day. Surfak - 240mg up to 2 times a day.
How to take	Take regularly to prevent constipation. Take with a full glass of water.
Side effects	Mild stomach cramps. Tell your doctor if this occurs. Diarrhea or loose stools.
Precautions	Do not take mineral oil while taking this medication.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed. If prescribed by a doctor, covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Bulk Forming Laxatives

Name: Psyllium (sil'-I-yum)

Brand name: Metamucil powder or instant granules, Prodiem

Use	Adds bulk and moisture to produce a bowel movement. May take up to 3 days to work.
Dose	Psyllium - 1 teaspoonful up to 3 times a day.
How to take	Metamucil powder or granules – dissolve or stir in 250mls of water or juice (about 1 cup). Prodiem – the granules should be mixed quickly in ½ glass of water and taken right away. This dose should be followed with a glass of water.
Side effects	Bloating and gas. You can reduce these side effects by slowly increasing the dose over 1 to 2 weeks.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not take within 2 hours of other medication or the effect of the other medication may be reduced.• Must be taken with an adequate amount of fluid to prevent constipation. Talk with your doctor if you are constipated for more than 1 week.• Do not take instant mix packets on a sodium (salt) restricted diet.• Comes in sugar free for patients with diabetes.
Coverage	If prescribed by a doctor, covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program. Sugar free is not covered.

Stimulant Laxatives

Name: Bisacodyl

Brand name and strength:

Dulcolax tablets 5mg

Dulcolax suppository 10mg

“Magic Bullet” suppository 10mg

Use	Helps intestinal muscle to move stool through your bowels.
Dose	Tablets: 10mg once daily usually at bedtime. Suppository: One suppository rectally once daily.
How to take	Tablets will work in to 6 to 12 hours. Suppositories usually work in 15 to 60 minutes. Magic Bullet suppositories work faster as they are in a water soluble base instead of an oil soluble base like Dulcolax.
Side effects	Abdominal pain, gas, diarrhea, rectal irritation or burning may occur with the suppository.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not crush or chew the tablets.• Do not take within one hour of meals or antacids or the effect will be reduced.• Do not take for more than 1 week unless instructed by your doctor.
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed.• Dulcolax suppositories and tablets are covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program if prescribed by your doctor.• Magic bullet suppositories are not covered.

Name: Senna

Brand name: Senokot

Strength	8.6mg tablet
Use	Helps intestinal muscle to move stool through your bowels.
Dose	2 to 4 tablets daily. Maximum is 8 tablets a day.
How to take	Tablets usually taken at bedtime. Larger doses may be divided into 2 daily doses. Tablets take 6 to 12 hours to work. Take with a glass of water.
Side effects	Abdominal pain, diarrhea.
Coverage	<p>You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed.</p> <p>Covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program if prescribed by your doctor.</p>

Laxatives that work by drawing water into the bowel to cause the bowel to move.

Name: Lactulose (lak'-tyoo-lose)

Brand name: Acilac, Laxilose

Use	Encourages bowel movement by drawing water into the bowel. This makes the stool mass soft and, increases bowel action.
Dose	15ml to 60ml a day.
How to take	Each dose should be taken with a full glass of water or fruit juice. This will provide enough liquid for the laxative to work well. The unpleasant taste of lactulose may be improved by following each dose with fruit juice or citrus flavoured carbonated beverages. Lactulose may not produce laxative results for 1 or 2 days.
Side effects	Bloating, gas, nausea, loss of appetite, cramping or diarrhea.
Precautions	Diabetics should exercise caution as lactulose contains some sugar (lactulose and galactose) and should not be used if you are on a galactose restricted diet.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed. Covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program if prescribed by your doctor.

Saline Laxatives

Name: Micro Enema

Brand name: Sodium Citrate, Sodium Lauryl Sulfoacetate, Sorbitol

Brand	Microlax Enema
Use	Constipation, Bowel Evacuation
Dose	One 5ml enema administered rectally.
How to use	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Remove cap and squeeze tube until a drop smears the tip making insertion easier.2. Insert nozzle into the rectum and squeeze out contents fully.3. Withdraw nozzle still squeezing the tube.4. Should take 5 to 20 minutes to work.
Side effects	Slight cramping may occur.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed. Covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Magnesium Hydroxide (mag nee' zhum
hye drox' ide)

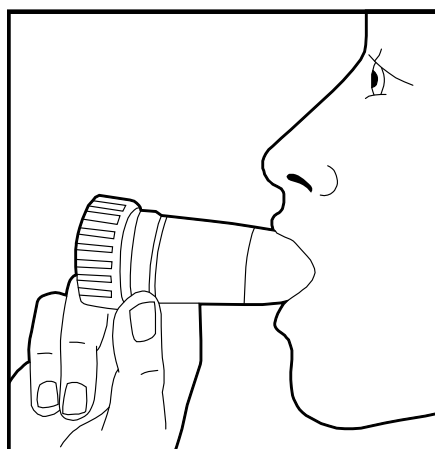
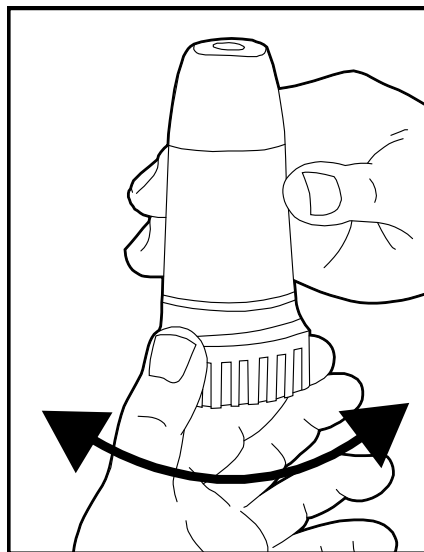
Brand name: Milk of Magnesia

Strength	Oral liquid 400mg/5mls Tablets = 311mg
Dose	15 to 30mls once or twice a day
How to take	Chew tablets well, follow dose with a glass of water
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhea• Stomach pain
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not take within 2 hours of certain medications as it may reduce the effect of that medication. Make sure your doctor or pharmacist knows that you use this medicine.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed.

Inhalers

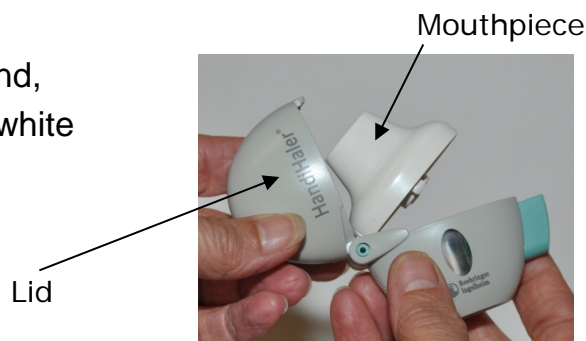
How to use the Symbicort Turbuhaler

1. Unscrew and lift off the cover.
A rattling sound may be heard.
This is normal.
2. Hold the inhaler upright with the red grip down. Do not hold by the mouthpiece when turning the grip.
3. Turn the grip as far as it will go in one direction and then turn it back again as far as it will go in the other direction. You will hear a “click” as you do this.
4. Place the mouthpiece gently between your teeth. Exhale or blow out a deep breath. Close your lips and breathe in hard and deeply through your mouth. You may not taste or feel any medication while inhaling – this is common. Do not chew or bite the mouthpiece.
5. Remove the inhaler from your mouth before breathing out again.
6. If more than one dose is prescribed. Repeat.
7. Replace the cover.

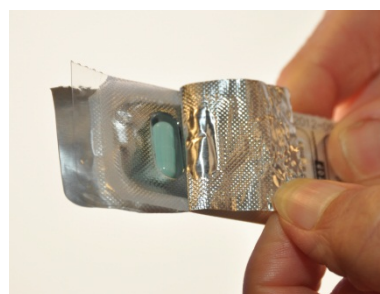


How to use the Spiriva Handihaler

1. Hold Handihaler in one hand, and open the gray lid and white mouthpiece.



2. Carefully open the foil packaging containing capsules.



3. Place one capsule (green) in the compartment below the white mouthpiece.



4. Close the mouthpiece. Puncture capsule by pushing the green button.

Button



5. Hold the handihaler upright with mouthpiece towards you.

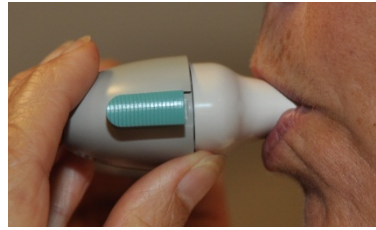
Exhale

6. Exhale or blow out a deep breath away from the handihaler.



7. Place the mouthpiece gently between your teeth.

8. Close your lips and breathe in hard and deeply through your mouth (not through nose).
You may be able to hear the capsule rattling around inside the compartment.



9. Remove and hold breath for 10 seconds (or as long as comfortable).

Breathe out (fully exhale).

Then do step 8 and 9 again!
We recommend that you do this twice so you get all of the medication.



10. Open compartment and throw capsule away.



11. Close dust cap.



How to use a Diskus inhaler

1. Open the Diskus by holding the outer case in one hand. Put your thumb of the other hand on the thumb grip. Push your thumb away from you as far as it will go and you hear a click.



2. Slide the lever away as far as it will go until you hear a click.



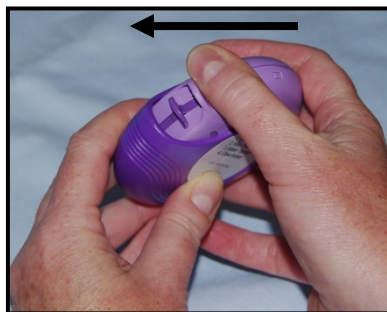
3. Hold the Diskus away from your mouth. Breathe out normally. Put the mouthpiece to your lips.
Breathe in deeply and steadily through the Diskus.



4. Move the Diskus away from your mouth and hold your breath for about 10 seconds.



5. To close the Diskus, put your thumb on the grip and slide it as far as it will go. You will hear it click shut.



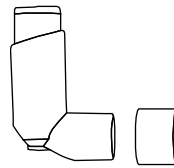
6. There is a counter on the Diskus that shows how many doses are left.

Using an AeroChamber® with an Aerosol Inhaler

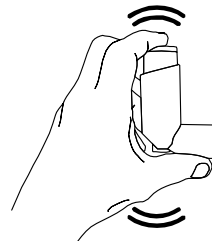
The AeroChamber is a device that attaches to a pressurized aerosol inhaler. The AeroChamber holds the medication while you breathe it into your lungs. Shake the inhaler well before each use.

Then follow these steps:

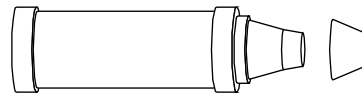
1. Take the place cap off the inhaler mouthpiece.



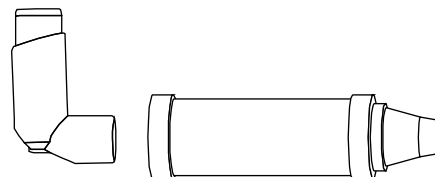
2. Shake the inhaler well.



3. Take the place cap of the AeroChamber.



4. Put the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the back of the AeroChamber.



5. Put the mouthpiece of the AeroChamber into your mouth and close your lips around the mouthpiece.

6. Press down on the inhaler canister to spray medication into the Aerochamber.

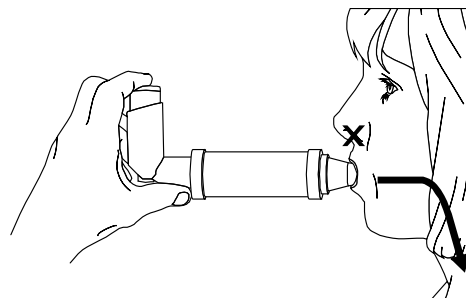
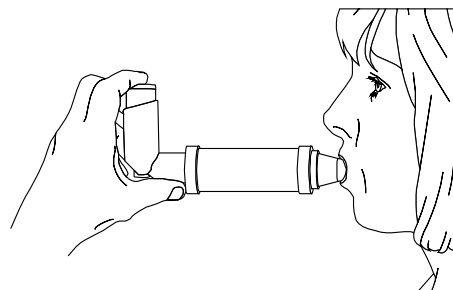
Take in a slow, deep breath over 3 to 5 seconds.

Do not spray more than 1 puff at a time.

Remove the AeroChamber from your mouth and hold your breath for as long as you are comfortable.

If you have trouble holding your breath:

- Put your mouth tight on the mouthpiece of the AeroChamber.
- Push the inhaler once, while you breathe in and out slowly 4 to 6 times with your mouth on the mouthpiece.

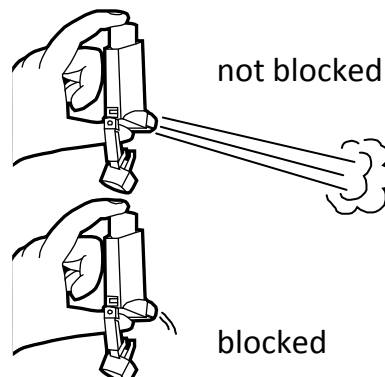


When you breathe in too fast, you will hear a whistle sound. This is an alarm to tell you to slow down when you are breathing in.

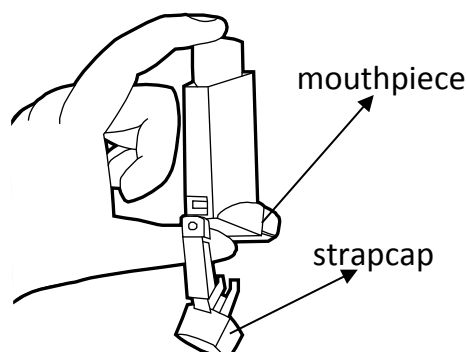
7. For each puff of medication, follow the same steps. Wait 30 seconds between puffs and shake the inhaler each time.
-

How to use your inhaler (CFC free) - Ventolin, Flovent, Advair, Atrovent

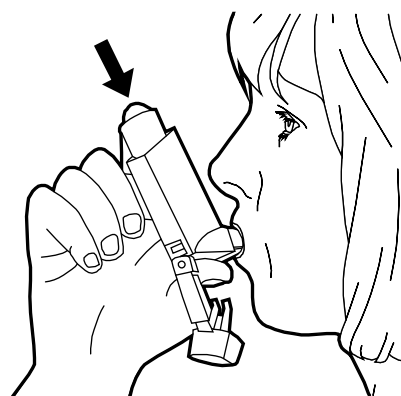
- Do not use after the expiration date.
- Before using for the first time, or if you have not used the inhaler for more than 4 weeks, you need to check it. Release 4 puffs into the air and check to see if it is blocked.



-
- Remove the cap from the mouthpiece.
 - Shake the inhaler well.



-
- Breathe out fully through the mouth.
 - Place the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it.
 - While breathing in deeply and slowly, fully press the top of the canister.
 - Hold your breath as long as possible, then breath normally.
 - Replace the cap on the mouthpiece after.



For Budesonide (Pulmicort), Symbicort (Budesonide/Formoterol), Flovent, rinse your mouth after each use.

Medications for neuropathic pain or nerve pain

The following drugs although indicated for other uses, are effective in controlling nerve pain.

Anti-depressants

Name: Amitriptyline (a-mee-trip'-ti-leen)

Brand name: Elavil

Strength: 10mg, 25mg, 50mg tablets

Coverage: Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Desipramine (des-ip'-ra-meen)

Brand name: Norpramin

Strength: 10mg, 25mg, 50mg tablets

Coverage: Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Amitriptyline and Desipramine have similar side effects and precautions as Nortriptyline on the next page.

Name: Nortriptyline (nor-trip'-ti-leen)

Brand name: Aventyl

Strength: 10mg, 25mg capsules

Dose	Begin with 10mg to 25mg at bedtime. Increase by the same dose weekly until the desired effect is achieved, or until side effects occur. A full effect is seen after 1 to 2 weeks at the maximum dose.
How to take	May take with or without food.
Side effects	Dry mouth, constipation, drowsiness, blurred vision, urinary retention, weight gain, increased sweating.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking a stool softener as Docusate will help with constipation.• A mouth spray such as Moistir that provides moisture will relieve the dry mouth.• Avoid drinking alcohol.• Medication may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Use a sunscreen of at least SPF 30 when outdoors.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Anti-convulsants

May take 2 to 3 weeks for a full response. Never stop medication suddenly. Dosage must be tapered down slowly.

Name: Phenytoin (fen' i toyn)

Brand name: Dilantin

Strength: 30 mg, 100mg capsules; 50 mg chewable tablets and a liquid solution

Dose	Start with 100mg 3 times a day. Your doctor will increase the dose as needed. Maximum dose is 600mg a day. Once the correct dose is reached and you are stable on this medication, you may be able to take your full dose once a day.
How to take	Take with food. Do not crush or chew capsule.
Side effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weight gain, constipation, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.• Dizziness, drowsiness, slurred speech.• Rash, low blood pressure, abnormal growth of hair, loss of hair.• Overgrowth of the gums, enlargement of male breasts, hepatitis.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not suddenly stop taking this medication.• Do not drink alcohol.• Call your doctor or pharmacist if you develop a rash.• Good mouth care is important. Visit your dentist on a regular basis.
Coverage	All types are covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Carbamazepine (kar-ba-maz'-e-peen)

Brand name: Tegretol

Strength	Available in 100mg chewable tablets, 200mg tablets, 200mg or 400mg controlled release tablets and liquid.
Dose	Start with 100mg 2 to 3 times a day. Your doctor will increase the dose as needed, usually by 100mg every few days.
How to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best taken with meals.• Shake liquid well before taking.
Side effects	Drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, headache, unsteadiness on feet, low blood sodium (if on a water pill as well).
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid alcohol use during treatment as Carbamazepine reduces alcohol tolerance.• Avoid taking with grapefruit juice.• Birth control pills, implants or shots will not be effective while on this medication.• Your bloodwork including hemoglobin, white blood cells, and liver function tests must be checked regularly while you are taking this medication.
Coverage	Liquids, regular release and chewable tablets are covered by Ontario Drug Benefit Program. Controlled release tablets need a Limited Use Code.

Name: Valproic (Acid-val-proe'-ik)

Brand name: Depakene

Strength	250mg and 500mg capsules. Liquid form available.
Dose	250mg to 750mg per day to start in divided doses.
How to take	Take with food to lessen nausea.
Side effects	Indigestion, nausea, trembling of hands/arms, hair loss, drowsiness, restlessness, diarrhea or constipation.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid alcohol use during treatment as Carbamazepine reduces alcohol tolerance.• Avoid drinking alcohol.• Regular bloodwork should be checked while you are taking this medication.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Note: Divalproic acid (Epival) is very similar to Valproic; comes in 250 and 500 mg enteric coated tablets.

Name: Gabapentin

Brand name: Neurontin

Strength	100mg, 300mg and 400mg capsules. 600mg and 800mg tablet.
Dose	Start with 100mg to 300mg once daily and increase as needed until desired effect is achieved. Maximum dose is 3600mg a day in divided doses.
How to take	With or without food.
Side effects	Mild to moderate and dose dependent dizziness, drowsiness, tremor, blurred vision and constipation.
Precautions	Do not take antacids within 2 hours of taking Gabapentin.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Pregabalin

Brand name: Lyrica

Strength	25mg, 50mg, 75mg, 100mg, 150mg, 200mg, 300mg
Dose	Start with 150mg daily divided to 50 mg three times daily or 75mg twice daily, and may be increased based on tolerability and effect.
How to take	With or without food.
Side effects	Dose dependent, headache, dizziness and blurred vision. Notify prescriber if unexplained muscle pain, fever.
Coverage	Section 8 “Exceptional Access Program” application for Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Opioids

The following are used for severe pain. Start with a low dose and increase slowly until desired relief is achieved or undesirable side effects occur.

Name: Oxycodone (Oks-ee-KOH-done)

Brand name:

- Oxy-IR (Immediate Release) in 5mg, 10mg and 20mg
- Oxycontin CR (Controlled Release) in 5mg, 10mg, 20mg, 40mg and 80mg
- Percocet/Percodan each contain 5mg Oxycodone in each tablet. Percocet also contains Acetaminophen. Percodan contains Aspirin.

Dose	<p>To start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5mg to 10mg every 6 hours of the immediate release, or • 10mg every 12 hours of the controlled release.
How to take	Best taken with food.
Side effects	Nausea, vomiting, constipation, drowsiness.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stool softener should be prescribed to treat the constipation. • Drink plenty of fluids to help with the constipation. • An anti-nauseant (such as Gravol) may need to be prescribed to treat the nausea. • Do not stop medication suddenly. The dose may need to be tapered slowly.
Coverage	Please ask your pharmacist about coverage by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program Coverage.

Name: Morphine

Brand name:

- Statex 5mg, 10mg, 25mg and 50mg immediate release tablets
- MS & IR 5mg, 10mg, 20mg and 30mg immediate release tablets
- MS Contin 15mg, 30mg, 60mg, 100mg and 200mg controlled release tablets
- MS-Eslon 10mg, 15mg, 30mg, 60mg, 100mg and 200mg controlled release capsules

Dose	To start, 5mg to 30mg every 4 hours of the immediate release. Once pain is controlled, switch to controlled release tablets at one-half of the total daily IR dose every 12 hours.
How to take	Take with food.
Side effects	Constipation, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, blurred vision, extreme happiness or extreme sadness.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of fluids and take a stool softener to help with the constipation.• Take an anti-nauseant (such as Gravol) to treat the nausea.• Do not stop medication suddenly. Your doctor will taper the dose.
Coverage	Please ask your pharmacist about coverage by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Name: Fentanyl

Brand name:

Duragesic Patch 12, 25, 50, 75, and 100

Strength and Dose	<p>The amount of drug is measured in mcg.</p> <p>May start with a 25mcg patch applied every 3 days.</p>
How to use	<p>Apply to clean dry flat surface on chest, back or upper arm. Hair at application site should be clipped (not shaved). Press on the skin firmly with palm of hand and hold for 30 seconds. Rotate skin site.</p>
Side effects	<p>Blurred vision, itchiness or rash at application site, nausea, vomiting and constipation.</p>
Precautions	<p>Upon removal, fold adhesive sides together and flush down the toilet. Remove any gel that leaks out with soap and water immediately.</p> <p>Avoid heat sources such as tanning beds, electric blankets and saunas as your temperature may rise and cause too much medicine to be released at once.</p>
Coverage	<p>Ontario Drug Benefit Program, except for 12mcg.</p>

Medications for osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means porous or brittle bones. Your bones become thinner and weaker causing them to break more easily.

Nutritional supplements

Name: Calcium

Strength	Calcium Carbonate 1250mg = 500mg elemental calcium.
Dose	1000mg to 1500mg per day through diet or supplement.
How to take	Doses should not exceed 500mg. Take with meals.
Diet sources	Milk and milk products, soy beans, sardines, salmon, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, dried beans, green vegetables.
Use	Formation of bone and teeth; muscle contraction, nerve transmission.
Side effects	Nausea and constipation.
Precaution	Need Vitamin D in your diet for calcium to be absorbed. See page 59.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed.

Name: Vitamin D

Strength	400 IU found in most multivitamins, 800 IU and 1000 IU.
Dose	2000 IU per day.
Diet sources	Fish liver oils, sardines, herring, salmon, tuna, milk and dairy products (butter, egg yolk). Also acquired through sunlight.
Use	Needed for absorption of calcium and phosphorous for proper bone growth and building new bone. Needed to prevent osteomalacia and osteoporosis.
Side effects	Excess Vitamin D intake can cause anorexia, vomiting and increase urination. Do not exceed 2000 IU daily.
Coverage	You can buy over-the-counter. A prescription is not needed.

Biphosphonates

Name: Risedronate (ris-ed'-roe-nate)

Brand name: Actonel

Strength	5mg and 35mg tablets
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreases risk of all bone fractures; increases bone mass.• Treat and prevent osteoporosis.
Dose	5mg a day plus calcium at a different time of day, 35mg once a week with calcium daily, or 150 mg tablet which is taken once a month.
How to take	Take with plain water on an empty stomach 30 minutes before the first food or drink of the day. Remain in an upright position for 30 minutes. Wait 1 hour before taking or drinking anything else. This will help prevent developing an ulcer in your esophagus.
Side effects	Nausea, gas, diarrhea, constipation, bone, muscle or joint pain, esophageal ulcer.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not take calcium, mineral supplements or antacids for at least 1 hour after taking Risedronate.• Make sure your doctor knows if you are taking any anti-inflammatories which may cause stomach problems.• Take your daily calcium supplement at least 1 hour (2 hours is better) after taking Risedronate.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The 30 and 150 mg tablets are covered but not available here at the hospital.

Name: Alendronate

Brand name: Fosamax

Strength	10mg and 70mg tablets.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Decreases risk of all bone fractures.* Treat and prevent osteoporosis.
Dose	10mg daily or 70mg once a week. There is a combination product that is available in the community but not the hospital. The product contains Alendronate and vitamin D. It's brand name is Fosavance.
How to take	Take in the morning with 8 ounces of plain water, 1 hour before taking any other food or medication. Sit upright for at least 30 minutes after taking to prevent damage to your esophagus (food tube).
Side effects	Nausea, gas, diarrhea or constipation, bone, muscle or joint pain, esophageal ulcer.
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take your daily calcium supplement at least 1 hour (2 hours is better) after taking Alendronate.• Do not take any other medications, drink or food for at least 1 hour after taking Alendronate. This will help your body absorb the medication.
Coverage	Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Medication listing

	Page
Alendronate	61
Amitriptyline	48
Amoxicillin	24
Baclofen	5
Bisacodyl	34
Calcium	58
Carbamazepine	51
Ciprofloxacin	25
Clonidine	10
Dantrolene	8
Dalteparin	29
Desipramine	46
Diazepam	9

Docusate Sodium	32
Domperidone	19
Fentanyl.....	56
Gabapentin.....	53
Lactulose	36
Lansoprazole	14
Levofloxacin	26
Magnesium Hydroxide.....	38
Metoclopramide	18
Micro Enema	37
Misoprostol	16
Morphine	55
Nitrofurantoin	23
Nortriptyline	49
Oxybutynin	6
Oxycodone	54
Pantoprazole	15

Phenytoin	50
Pregabalin	53
Psyllium	33
Ranitidine	13
Risedronate	60
Senna	35
Sucalfate	17
Sulfamethoxazole – Trimethoprim.....	21
Suppositories.....	32
Surfak	32
Tizanidine	11
Tolterodine	7
Valproic	52
Vitamin D	59
Warfarin.....	27

