

Donepezil (Aricept®)

Dementia Drug Education Handout



Why is this drug used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment for mild, moderate, and severe stages of dementia due to Alzheimer's Disease 		
Typical dosing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with 2.5 mg - 5 mg daily for 4 - 6 weeks May slowly increase the dose if no significant side effects. Maximum daily dose is 23 mg. However, side effects may limit 23 mg dosage. 		
Formulations & Estimated Cost:	<p>1. Tablets (brand & generic): <u>Strengths:</u> 5 mg, 10 mg, 23 mg (sustained release, do not crush or cut, no generic available) <u>Cost (30 day supply):</u> Generic \$260 - \$340; Brand \$410 - \$460</p> <p>2. Tablet, oral disintegrating (brand & generic): <u>Strengths:</u> 5 mg, 10 mg <u>Cost (30 day supply):</u> Generic \$235; Brand \$460</p>		
Contraindications & Precautions for this drug:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypersensitivity to donepezil. May include: swelling, rash, hives. Cardiac dysfunction: heart block or cardiac conduction abnormalities, slow heart rate. 		
Common Side Effects:	<u>Common Side Effects</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea Vomiting Diarrhea Loss of appetite Dizziness Headache Weight loss 	<u>Less Common</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bruising Low heart rate Insomnia Fainting Frequent urination 	<u>Rare Side Effects</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worsening asthma Seizures Muscle cramps



Managing this medication:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May take with or without food. 2. <i>Inform your health-care provide if you experience: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, vivid dreams or nightmares, or other side effects</i> 3. <i>Inform your health-care provider RIGHT AWAY if you experience:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fainting • Heartburn or stomach pain that is new or won't go away • Nausea or vomiting, blood in the vomit, dark vomit that looks like coffee grounds • Bowel movements or stools that look like black tar • New or worse asthma or breathing problems • Seizures • Difficulty passing urine
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References:

1. Lexicomp – donepezil, Aricept®
2. Red Book Average Wholesale Price of Drugs 2013
3. Kirby Lee, PharmD, MA, MAS and Ron Finley, RPh, UCSF Memory and Aging Center