

## Parent/Carer's Information Leaflet

# Ethosuximide

(also called Zarontin, Emeside)

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Epilepsy Action Website:

[www.epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk)

## Ethosuximide (also called Zarontin or Emeside)

Ethosuximide is used mainly for people with absence seizures (fits). Occasionally it is used for other seizure types but in general is not effective for preventing convulsive seizures.

Ethosuximide is available as a syrup (either blackcurrant or raspberry-flavoured) consisting of 250mg per 5ml spoonful, or orange or yellow capsules (250mg). There are several brands available.

### How do I use it?

- Ethosuximide (either liquid or capsules) is usually taken twice daily.
- If your child takes the liquid form you should use either a measuring spoon or syringe to make sure that your child gets exactly the right amount.
- If a dose is forgotten and you remember up to 4 hours after missing the dose, give the forgotten dose when you can.
- If you remember only at or near the time the next dose is due, just give your child the usual dose. **Do not** give any extra Ethosuximide.
- If your child vomits within 15 minutes of taking a dose, give the dose again; if your child vomits after 15 minutes after taking the dose, **do not** give it again.
- Because the medicine builds up in the body slowly, it may not control the seizures for as long as a week or two when first started.

Ethosuximide is at the correct dosage when your child is free of seizures or convulsions (fits) and has no side effects. It is rarely necessary to measure the Ethosuximide blood level.

If your child has been taking the medicine regularly, **do not stop it suddenly** as this could bring on more fits, seizures or convulsions.

Keep a seizure diary if you can and remember to always bring all the medicines with you to clinic appointments.

### Can I use it with other medicines?

Most other medicines, antibiotics and other antiepileptic medicines can be used with Ethosuximide. Ethosuximide does not reduce the effectiveness of the oral contraceptive pill. Always check with your Doctor or pharmacist

## What are the common side effects?

There are very few side effects associated with Ethosuximide and they tend to be minor.

1. There may be some stomach upset with or without nausea and vomiting and loss of appetite. If this occurs the medicine should be given with food. If this persists see your Doctor (hospital or GP) or specialist nurse.
2. An initial change in mood (moodiness, irritability, headache or tiredness) may occur during the first couple of weeks of treatment; if these symptoms do not go away, you should see your Doctor (hospital or GP) or specialist nurse.
3. A red allergic skin rash may develop with or without some associated fever or irritability, blisters or a swollen tongue. This can happen within the first month of starting treatment. It is usually a minor side effect but it can be more serious, if this happens, you should contact your Doctor (hospital or GP) or specialist nurse immediately.
4. Very rarely Ethosuximide has been associated with bone marrow problems, e.g. lowering the number of blood cells. Decreased numbers of white cells may then lead to infections. There may also be mouth ulcers and a sore throat. Decreased numbers of platelets (which help the blood to clot) can occur leading to bruising or bleeding. Reduced numbers of red blood cells with anaemia can occur (which can cause fatigue and loss of appetite). These are potentially very serious side effects and if these symptoms do occur you should contact your Doctor (hospital or GP) or specialist nurse **immediately**.
5. If your child suffers fever (high temperature), joint pain and general ill health you should contact your Doctor (hospital or GP) or specialist nurse immediately,

For further information please refer to the manufacturer's leaflet.