

Carbimazole in thyrotoxicosis

This medicine is available as tablets containing carbimazole 5 mg and 20 mg.

How does it work?

Carbimazole is converted in the body to the active agent, methimazole which acts on the thyroid to reduce overactivity.

How do I take it?

Treatment is started at high dosage often 20-60mg per day taken as one dose and is maintained until the patient's thyroid returns to normal activity. The dosage is then gradually decreased so as to maintain normal thyroid activity. This maintenance dosage can vary from patient to patient in the range 5-15mg per day which may be taken as a single daily dosage. Therapy is usually continued for 18-24 months.

What are the side effects?

Adverse reactions if they occur are usually seen in the first eight weeks of treatment.

- Headaches, nausea, joint pains, stomach upset.
- Skin rashes are common in possibly 1 in 50 patients. If they occur contact your doctor.
- A rare side effect is bone marrow depression which can present in 1 in 1000 patients. This presents as a severe sore throat, mouth ulcers, fever. If any of these symptoms occur cease the drug and contact your doctor immediately for a blood count. The suppression of the bone marrow is often temporary with the bone marrow recovering after 1-2 week.

Carbimazole during pregnancy and lactation

Carbimazole can be used in pregnancy. However, please let us know if you are planning to conceive or as soon as you know you are pregnant. Carbimazole does cross the placenta and there have been rare instances of babies born with nail/finger abnormalities (aplasia cutis) while on carbimazole. We would therefore change you over to another drug called Propylthiouracil which is known to be safer in pregnancy. Carbimazole does enter mother's milk so we would advise the use of Propylthiouracil during breastfeeding.

More information is available on the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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