



## Pharmacy Department

# Linezolid and Serotonin Syndrome

### Linezolid and serotonin syndrome

We have given you this leaflet because you are prescribed linezolid and other medications that together can increase your risk of serotonin syndrome. This leaflet explains what serotonin syndrome is, and what the symptoms are, so you know what to look out for and can seek medical attention if needed.

### What is serotonin?

Serotonin is a natural chemical found in your body which helps to regulate your mood, emotions and sleep.

### What is serotonin syndrome?

Serotonin syndrome is a rare, but potentially serious, set of side effects that can occur when the levels of serotonin in your body become too high.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of serotonin syndrome can be **mild**:

- diarrhoea
- restlessness

or more **severe**:

- excessive sweating
- tremor (including fine shaking of the hands)
- shivering
- involuntary muscle twitches or jerking
- confusion and mood changes
- raised blood pressure and faster pulse (heart rate)
- increased body temperature
- seizures or convulsions (fits).

### When to seek medical advice

Seek medical advice if you experience any of the symptoms above.

**Contact your GP or the pharmacy hospital team (telephone: 01305 255294) for advice if you have:**

- mild unexplained symptoms that last for more than two days

## **Go to your nearest emergency department immediately if you have:**

- any of the more severe symptoms

Take this leaflet with you and make sure the doctor treating you is aware of any medicines that you are currently taking, including linezolid.

We advise your close relatives and friends to also read this factsheet so that they can help you identify symptoms and get you medical help if needed.

## **Taking linezolid with other medicines and substances**

Other medicines and substances can interact with linezolid and can increase your serotonin levels, which can then become harmful to you. If you are taking linezolid, you should avoid taking:

- St John's wort (a herbal remedy used for depression)
- recreational drugs (for example, MDMA ('ecstasy'), cocaine or amphetamines)

Other commonly used medicines, such as antidepressants and certain painkillers (for example, codeine, tramadol, fentanyl and methadone), can also increase your serotonin levels.

Before taking any new medicines or herbal remedies while on linezolid, it is important that you speak to your hospital pharmacy team (telephone: 01305 255294), GP practice pharmacist, local pharmacist or GP.

## **Contact us**

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the hospital pharmacy team; telephone: 01305 255294.

## **About this leaflet:**

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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