

How to contact us:

Further information on any drugs used in Dementia can be found on the below websites;

Donepezil (Aricept)

<http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/pilldonepezil.pdf>

Galantamine (Reminyl)

<http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/pillgalantamine.pdf>

Rivastigmine (Exelon)

<http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/pillrivastigmine.pdf>

Memantine (Ebixa)

<http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/pillmemantine.pdf>

For information on medications such as Antidepressants, Antipsychotics and mood stabilisers the following two sites provide an excellent resource;

Choice and Medication

<http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pages/printableleaflets/>

Electronic Medicines Compendium

<http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>



Community Mental Health Team for Older People Tel: (028) 9504 0346

operates from Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

We also offer an extended telephone advice and support service for people living with DEMENTIA and their carers operating:
Monday to Friday until 8pm
Saturday to Sunday 10am to 2pm

If you need to speak to someone outside these hours please contact:
Regional Emergency Social Work Service
(028) 9504 9999

The Alzheimer's Society has several factsheets on medication and these can be accessed from the website www.alzheimers.org.uk or by contacting their local office;

Local Alzheimer's Office Unit 4, Balmoral
Business Park, Boucher Crescent, Belfast,
BT12 6HU
Tel: 028 9066 4100

www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/

CommunityMentalHealthTeams



what medications are available to treat
Alzheimer's Disease?



What medications are available to treat Alzheimer's Disease?

There are 2 main drug treatments in Alzheimer's disease:

1. Anticholinesterases;
 - Donepezil (Aricept ®), available as ordinary tablets and melt-in-the-mouth tablets.
 - Galantamine (Reminyl ® and Reminyl XL ®), available as twice a day tablets, once a day capsules and a syrup.
 - Rivastigmine (Exelon ®), available as twice a day capsules, a syrup, and once a day sticky patch.
2. NMDA antagonists such as Memantine (Ebixa ®), available as tablets and syrup.

What effect do Acetylcholinesterase Inhibitors have on Alzheimer's disease?

In Alzheimer's disease the brain has a reduction in a chemical called acetylcholine. These medications act by increasing the level of acetylcholine in the brain and so improve the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and slow the progression of the disease for a period of time.

What are the adverse effects of Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors?

Many people do not experience any adverse effects but the most common side effects that patients can experience are:

- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Dizziness
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Sleep Disturbance

These adverse effects generally occur shortly after the treatment has started or the dose increased. The adverse effects usually reduce as your body adjusts to the new medication. The leaflet provided with the medication box will contain more information. If you are experiencing persistent or intolerable side effects please discuss this with your doctor or local pharmacist.

Are there any reasons why someone would be unable to take acetylcholinesterase inhibitors?

You may not be able to take Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors if you have:

- Heart disease such as a slow or irregular heartbeat
- Severe lung disease such as Asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Stomach or duodenal ulcers
- Seizures (fits) or convulsions
- Liver problems or hepatitis
- Difficulty passing urine or mild kidney disease

Before prescribing this medication your doctor will ask about any previous illness and arrange for you to attend for an ECG heart trace to look for a slow or irregular heartbeat.

What is the effect of Memantine in Alzheimer's disease?

Memantine (Ebixa) works on a chemical called Glutamate which can accumulate when nerve cells in the brain are damaged. Memantine helps to reduce the accumulation of glutamate which can be toxic to brain cells. Memantine may be prescribed in the middle to later stages of Alzheimer's disease and may slow the progression of the disease as well as helping symptoms such as agitation.

What are the adverse effects of Memantine?

Many people do not experience adverse effects with Memantine but the most common adverse effects are:

- Headache or
- Dizziness.

These symptoms are most likely to occur shortly after commencing the medication.

Are there any reasons why someone would be unable to take Memantine?

Anyone who has:

- Severe heart disease or
- Significant kidney disease or
- A history of epileptic seizures