

ARICEPT™ (also known as donepezil or E2020)

The purpose of this medicine:

Aricept is one of a group of drugs called “cholinesterase inhibitors” which is used to treat symptoms in individuals with mild to moderate Alzheimer Disease.

In brains of people with Alzheimer Disease there is a progressive degeneration of nerve cells. Particularly notable is a degeneration of cells, which make acetylcholine, a chemical, thought to be important for learning and memory. People with Alzheimer Disease have lower brain levels of acetylcholine. Aricept acts by decreasing the activity of acetylcholinesterase, an enzyme whose function is to break down acetylcholine. It is believed that because Aricept reduces the breakdown of acetylcholine, it will lead to an increase in the level of acetylcholine in the brain. The potential beneficial effect could lessen as the disease progresses and when fewer cells are available to make acetylcholine.

How does it help?

Aricept is intended to treat symptoms in individuals with mild to moderate Alzheimer Disease. In clinical trials, individuals who took Aricept when compared to individuals who took a placebo (a substance which looks like the drug but has no effect), showed improvement or no further decline in cognition (including memory, orientation, language) and function (including performance of daily activities).

Aricept may take as long as 12 weeks to being working and the type of and length of response to this medicine will vary from individual to individual.

What does Aricept not do?

Aricept is not a cure for Alzheimer Disease as it does not affect the underlying process of the disease.

Who should take Aricept?

Individuals who have been diagnosed with mild to moderate Alzheimer Disease.

How do you obtain Aricept?

Aricept can only be obtained with a prescription from a doctor after a diagnosis of Alzheimer Disease has been made. This medicine has been prescribed only for you or for the person you are caring for. Never give it to anyone else.

Important! Things to know before taking Aricept:

You should tell the doctor if you are allergic to donepezil hydrochloride or piperidine derivatives such as Mycobutin (rifabutin), Ritalin (methylphenidate), Akineton (biperiden HCl), Artane (trohexyphenidyl HCl), Bupivacaine HCl, and Paxil (paroxetine HCl). You should also tell you doctor if you have a condition affecting your heart or you lungs; if you have had seizures; if you have had fainting spells; and if you have a history of peptic ulcers or have an increased risk of developing ulcers (for example, if you are taking non-steroidal anti- inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs] or high doses of acetylsalicylic acid [ASA/ Aspirin]). Aricept should not be used if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How do you take Aricept?

- Take Aricept only as prescribed by your doctor. Never change the does yourself.
- Take Aricept in the evening just before going to bed. If you experience insomnia (difficulty sleeping), Aricept may be taken in the morning.
- Aricept may be taken with or without food.
- If you miss taking a dose of Aricept do not worry, just take the next dose when it is due. Do NOT take 2 does at once.
- If you have problems remembering to take medications, it may be necessary to have someone manage this for you.
- Aricept is available in a blisterpack to help remind you to take your medication every day. Ask your physician or pharmacist for more details.

What are the possible side effects?

Along with its beneficial effect, Aricept may cause some undesirable reactions. The most common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, insomnia, vomiting, muscle cramps, fatigue, and loss of appetite. In clinical studies these effects were often mild, and generally went away with continued treatment. In clinical studies some patients treated with Aricept experienced fainting. If you feel unwell in any other way or have any symptoms that you do not understand, or find distressing, you should contact your doctor immediately.

What to do if an overdose is taken:

If more medication has been taken than what has been prescribed, contact your doctor, hospital emergency department, or the nearest poison control centre immediately.

How do you store Aricept?

Aricept tablets contain donepezil hydrochloride. The 5 mg tablets are white and the 10 mg tablets are yellow.

- Keep this medicine in a safe place, out of reach of children
- Keep this medicine in a cool dry place (15 ° to 30° C) and avoid exposure to moisture.
- If the doctor decides to stop Aricept treatment, return any leftover medicine to your pharmacist. Keep it only if the doctor tells you to do so.

How much does it cost and who pays for this medicine?

Aricept cost approximately \$5.00 a day. Aricept is covered under provincial drug plans in five Provinces: Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Other provinces are currently working to put Aricept on their respective provincial drug plans.

To be entitled to have Aricept paid for by provincial plans, individuals must meet specific clinical criteria in each of the provinces. For more information regarding reimbursement of the medication, you should speak with your physician or call the Pfizer Medical Information Line at 1-800-463-6001.

Aricept is also covered by most private insurance plans.

Who produces Aricept?

Pfizer Canada Inc., 17300 Trans – Canada Highway, Kirkland, PQ H9J 2M5.

For Further Information:

This information sheet is a brief description and summary about this medicine. If you have any question about Aricept, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

<p>This sheet is for your information only and does not represent an endorsement of Aricept™ by the Alzheimer society if Canada.</p>

Please call the Alzheimer Society of Peel for further information:
Port Credit – 905-278-3667 Meadowvale – 905-542-7415 Brampton – 905-792-1319

*Source: Drugs: Aricept™
Fact Sheet – Alzheimer Society of Canada*