

# Baclofen (Lioresal®) Oral Tablets

## Why is this medication prescribed?

- Baclofen is a muscle relaxant (antispasmodic) used to reduce muscle spasticity from spinal cord injury/disease, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy. Reducing spasticity can improve mobility and the ability to manage everyday activities.
- Research suggests baclofen works by interfering with the release of chemical messengers that cause spasticity.

## How should this medication be used?

- Baclofen is available as either 10 mg or 20 mg oral tablets and is taken with or without food.
- The usual starting dose for baclofen is 5 mg to 10 mg taken three times a day. If tolerated, the dose can be increased in 5 mg to 10 mg increments every 3 days until an optimal response is achieved or the maximum total dose (80 mg/day) is reached. A typical dose for chronic use is 40 to 80 mg/day.
- Do **NOT** stop taking baclofen abruptly. Suddenly stopping this medication can cause baclofen withdrawal (e.g., fast heartbeat, sweating, confusion, poor sleep, and worsening of muscle spasms). If baclofen is no longer needed, the dose should be gradually reduced over at least 1 to 2 weeks before stopping it. Your health care team can guide you.

## When does this medication start to work?

When baclofen is taken orally, the clinical effects start slowly. Some muscle spasm pain relief should be noticeable within 3 to 4 days of use. Maximum benefit typically happens after 5 to 10 days of use, although this will depend on the dosing titration schedule.

## What special precautions should I follow?

- Before taking baclofen, talk with your doctor if you have any of the following:
  - History of seizures
  - Kidney dysfunction (lower baclofen doses are used in this situation)
  - Are pregnant or breastfeeding, or this situation is likely in the near future
- Baclofen can impact the mental/physical abilities needed to do certain tasks. It is best to wait until the body adjusts to the medication or dose changes before driving/operating machinery.
- If you take other medications that cause drowsiness, the addition of baclofen can cause further drowsiness.
  - Baclofen may not be tolerated as well in older adults because it can cause drowsiness, dizziness and weakness.
- Avoid alcohol while taking this medication. The combination can result in excessive drowsiness and impaired concentration.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medications you take (prescription, non-prescription, herbals, over-the-counter products, etc.) so drug interactions can be minimized.

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## What should I do if I forget a dose?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. In this case, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule.
- Do **NOT** take a double dose to make up for a missed dose.

## What are the possible side effects of this medication?

All medicines can cause side effects, which may range from mild to severe. Common side effects of baclofen include:

- Sedation, drowsiness
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Cloudy thinking (e.g., confusion, memory loss, trouble concentrating/paying attention)
- Muscle weakness

Remember, your doctor has prescribed this medication because the benefit to you is considered greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects.

## How should this medication be stored?

- Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed and out of reach of children.
- Store at room temperature, away from excess heat/moisture (not in the kitchen or bathroom).
- If at any point in the future baclofen is stopped, please return any remaining supply to your community pharmacy for proper medication disposal.