



## Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC

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### INFORMATION ON CETIRIZINE

#### What is Cetirizine?

- Cetirizine works by blocking a chemical produced in the body called histamine. Cetirizine is therefore a type of antihistamine. It belongs to a group of antihistamines known as second generation antihistamines
- It is used for wide range of allergic type symptoms including seasonal allergies, chronic urticaria (hives)
- Dr. Donovan may prescribe off label in some scarring alopecia and sometimes in alopecia areata

#### How is it prescribed?

- The starting dose for adults is 5 mg once daily.
- In some situations, Dr. Donovan may increase the dose to 10 mg daily. and sometimes even 20 mg. The maximum dose in some studies is 30 mg but this is prescribed only on a case by case basis.
- The drug's effects last about 24 hours
- Cetirizine can be taken with or without food

#### How is it prescribed in children?

- For children 6-12 months, Dr. Donovan may recommend ½ teaspoon once daily of the liquid suspension (5 mg per 5 mL)
- For children 12-23 months, Dr. Donovan may recommend ½ teaspoon one daily but this may be increased to twice daily of the liquid suspension (5 mg per 5 mL)
- For children 2-5 years old, Dr. Donovan may recommend ½ teaspoon one daily but this will usually be increased to twice daily of the liquid suspension (5 mg per 5 mL) if tolerated well.
- For children 6 years and older, there are options for the liquid, chewable pill or tablet. The dose is generally 5 to 10 mg daily in single dose or divided into two doses.

**Who should not take Cetirizine?**

- Do not take cetirizine if you have an allergy to cetirizine
- Do not take cetirizine if you have an allergy to hydroxyzine (Atarax)
- Do not take cetirizine if you have kidney problems or liver problems
- Don't take without double checking with Dr. Donovan if you are over 65 ( a lower dose may be needed)
- This medication may or may not be recommended in men with enlarged prostate glands

**What are the side effects of Cetirizine?**

**Headaches and drowsiness**

- are among the more commonly reported side effects but even these occur in less than 10 % of users. Do not operate machinery or drive when first starting this drug in case it makes you drowsy. One must also be cautious of using alcohol and sedatives in general as these too can make users drowsy. The is normally a non drowsy (non sedating) antihistamine for most people.

**Other side effects include**

Fatigue (6%)	Dry mouth (5%)	Dizziness (2%)
Diarrhea (3%)	Malaise (4%)	Bronchospasm (2-3%)
Vomiting (3%)	Nosebleeds (4%)	

**Less than 1 % experience these side effects:**

Stomach pain	Drowsiness	Angioedema
Fussiness	Hallucinations	Hypotension
Tremor	Tongue discoloration	

**Please STOP Cetirizine and tell Dr. Donovan if you develop:**

- difficult or painful urination
- pounding heartbeat, fast heart beat or irregular heart beat

**Seek medical attention right away (by calling 911 etc) if you develop**

- seizures
- signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction including trouble breathing, hives, swelling in the mouth, or swelling in the throat

## Under what situations should I stop Cetirizine?

- All medicines can cause allergic reactions. Serious allergic reactions are very rare. Any sudden wheeziness, difficulty in breathing, chest pain, fever, sudden swellings, rash or itching (especially affecting the whole body) should be reported to a doctor immediately.
- Stop cetirizine if you develop dark urine or pale stools
- Stop cetirizine if you feel unwell in any way and check with your doctor

## Do any medications interact with Cetirizine?

Dr. Donovan must be advised if you take these medications before starting Cetirizine. There may or may not be an interaction, and the dose may or may not need to be altered. In some cases though, cetirizine will not be recommended.

abiraterone acetate	mirtazapine
acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (e.g., donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine)	muscle relaxants (e.g., baclofen, cyclobenzaprine, methocarbamol, orphenadrine)
acridinium	nabilone
alcohol	narcotic pain medications (e.g., codeine, fentanyl, oxycodone, morphine)
amphetamines (e.g., dextroamphetamine, lisdexamfetamine)	nefazodone
other antihistamines (e.g., diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine, hydroxyzine)	nicardipine
antipsychotics (e.g., chlorpromazine, clozapine, haloperidol, olanzapine, quetiapine, risperidone)	olopatadine
aripiprazole	oxybutynin
atorvastatin	perampanel
atropine	potassium chloride
azelastine	pramipexole
“azole” antifungals (e.g., fluconazole, ketoconazole, voriconazole)	prazosin
baclofen	progesterone
barbiturates (e.g., butalbital, pentobarbital, phenobarbital)	propranolol
benzodiazepines (e.g., lorazepam, diazepam)	quinidine
belladonna	quinine
	reserpine
	rifampin
	ropinirole
	rufinamide
	St. John's wort
	scopolamine
	secretin

benztropine  
betahistine  
brimonidine  
buprenorphine  
buspirone  
carvedilol  
chloral hydrate  
cobcicstat  
cyclosporine  
dexamethasone  
dipyridamole  
disopyramide  
doxorubicin  
dronedarone  
droperidol  
efavirenz  
flavoxate  
grapefruit juice  
glucagon  
glycopyrrolate  
ipratropium  
kava kava  
ketotifen  
magnesium sulfate  
mefloquine  
methotrimeprazine  
metyrosine  
mirabegron

seizure medications (e.g., clobazam, ethosuximide, felbamate, levetiracetam, phenobarbital, phenytoin, primidone, topiramate, valproic acid, zonisamide)  
selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs; e.g., citalopram, duloxetine, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline)  
sleep aids (e.g., zopiclone)  
sodium oxybate  
tacrolimus  
tamoxifen  
tapentadol  
tenofovir  
thiazide diuretics (water pills; e.g., hydrochlorothiazide, indapamide, metolazone)  
tiotropium  
tolterodine  
tramadol  
tranylcypromine  
trazodone  
tricyclic antidepressants (e.g., amitriptyline, clomipramine, desipramine, trimipramine)  
tyrosine kinase inhibitors (e.g., dabrafenib, imatinib, nilotinib, sunitinib)  
verapamil  
vinblastine

