

Cytisine

A medication to help stop smoking

Cytisine is a medicine to help you stop smoking. Cytisine does not contain nicotine but mimics its effects and 'tricks' your brain into thinking you've had a cigarette. It reduces the urge to smoke, reduces withdrawal symptoms and helps relieve cravings.

What dose do I take?

Cytisine is swallowed as a tablet or capsule. One pack of cytisine contains 100 tablets which is a complete treatment course (25 days). Each tablet contains 1.5mg of cytisine.

Cytisine can be taken with or without food, and should be taken with water according to the following schedule:

Days of treatment	Recommended dosage	Maximum daily dose
Day 1 to 3	1 tablet every 2 hours	6 tablets
Day 4 to 12	1 tablet every 2.5 hours	5 tablets
Day 13 to 16	1 tablet every 3 hours	4 tablets
Day 17 to 20	1 tablet every 5 hours	3 tablets
Day 21 to 25	1-2 tablets a day	2 tablets

- Smoking should be **stopped no later than on the 5th day** of treatment.
- Smoking should not be continued during treatment as this may worsen side effects.

What happens if I use more cytisine than I should?

If you use more cytisine than as directed, you may experience some nausea, vomiting, increased heart rate, and fluctuations in blood pressure. In some cases, breathing problems, blurred vision, convulsions are also seen. If you experience any of the above symptoms (or any symptoms not mentioned in this leaflet), stop taking cytisine immediately and contact your doctor/pharmacist.

What should I do if I forget to take cytisine?

This may be a good sign if your cravings are reducing and you are not needing to take cytisine in your smoking cessation journey. However, it is important that you finish the 25-day course.

Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose, but it is important you take the next dose and complete the 25-day course.

What are the potential side effects?

Some of the common side effects include:

- Change in appetite (mainly increase)
- Weight gain
- Dizziness
- Irritability
- Mood changes
- Anxiety
- Dry mouth
- Sleep disorders (insomnia, drowsiness)
- Headaches
- Tachycardia
- Nausea/vomiting
- Constipation
- Abdominal pain
- Fatigue

Most of the above side effects occur at the beginning of the therapy and resolve along its duration. These symptoms could also be the result of stopping smoking (withdrawal symptoms), not treatment with cytisine.

Frequently asked questions

Does cytisine alter fertility or pregnancy?

You must use effective methods of contraception while on cytisine if you are a woman who might become pregnant. Cytisine should not be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Should cytisine be stopped for surgery?

No, you do not need to stop taking cytisine if you have surgery.

Driving and using machines

Cytisine has no influence on the ability to drive and use machines.

Can I drink alcohol when taking cytisine?

There is no interaction with alcohol. If unsure, speak with your doctor/pharmacist.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Respiratory Secretaries, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284220

(If cytisine prescribed by respiratory consultant and you have questions about it)

Hertfordshire Stop Smoking Service:

- Telephone 0800 389 3998 (for stop smoking advice and support)
- Text SMOKEFREE to 80818
- Email: healthimprovementservice@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.

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