

Medication: Cholestyramine 4 g

What is Cholestyramine?

Cholestyramine belongs to a group of medications called bile acid binding resins. It works in the digestive system to absorb the cholesterol-containing bile acids, which then pass out through the body in the feces. Cholestyramine may also be used to help stop diarrhea associated with irritable bowel syndrome.

Expected Benefit:

- It usually takes a few days to notice a benefit

Watch for possible side effects:

It is important to be aware of the side effects however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects occur in everyone. Many of the less serious side effects will improve over the first few days of taking the medication.

If you have problems with these side effects talk with your doctor or pharmacist:

- Bloating
- Flatulence
- Abdominal discomfort
- Constipation

Stopping the medication:

There should be no withdrawal effect when stopping the medication if the medication is not taken regularly.

How to use this medication:

- Take with meals
- NOT to be taken dry; mix as directed on packaging
- Do NOT sip or keep in mouth for a long time; may discolor teeth
- Rinse mouth with water after taking
- Administer other medications one hour before, or 4-6 hours after taking cholestyramine
- If used long-term or in higher doses, consider supplementation with folic acid, calcium, fat-soluble vitamins (vitamins A, D, E, and K), and iron.

Dosing Schedule:

- Start with 4 grams twice a day
- Increase dose according to table below
- You can stay at the same dose (stop increasing) if you get side effects
 - You might want to lower the dose one step

With breakfast	With dinner	
4 grams	4 grams	For 2 weeks



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8 grams	8 grams	For 2 weeks
12 grams	12 grams	For 2 weeks
16 grams	16 grams	For 1 month; stay on this dose

- Follow up with clinic before further increasing the dose

Drugs and Foods to Avoid:

Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medication, including non-prescription medication (over-the-counter medication) and herbal products.

- Cholestyramine can prevent the absorption of your medications, and vitamins from food
- Take your medication an hour before or 4-6 hours after cholestyramine
- Take a multivitamin (with iron for women) daily

Please contact the Complex Chronic Diseases Program if you have further questions about your medications.