

Medication: Rizatriptan 5 or 10 mg

What is Rizatriptan?

Rizatriptan belongs to a family of medications called “triptans” used to treat acute migraine headaches. Migraine symptoms may be caused by swollen blood vessels in the head. Rizatriptan is thought to reduce the swelling of these blood vessels. This helps to take away the headache and other symptoms of a migraine attack, such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting) and being sensitive to light and sound.

Rizatriptan works only when a migraine attack has started. It will not stop you from getting an attack.

Expected Benefit:

- Relief should occur within 1 – 2 hrs

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:

- Heaviness of the arms and legs
- Flushing
- Sensation of pins and needles
- Tightness in the chest, neck, or throat
- These side effects can be reduced or avoided with a smaller dose or trying a different triptan (e.g., zolmitriptan)
- If you develop muscle spasms and fever, stop the medication and let the clinic know

Stopping the medication:

There should be no withdrawal effect when stopping the medication, as the medication should not be taken regularly.

How to use this medication:

- Take this medication with or without food
- Oral dissolving wafers can be taken without water
- Rizatriptan is most effective if taken at the earliest onset of migraine.
- Can be taken with NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac)
- Can also be taken with metoclopramide if nausea is severe

Dosing Schedule:

- 5 or 10 mg at earliest onset of headache
- Dose may be repeated in 2 hrs if no benefit

- Maximum 20 mg per day
- Should not be taken on a daily basis
- Use of analgesics for migraines more than 10 times per month increases the risk of “Medication Overuse Headaches”
- Frequent migraines may benefit from medication for migraine prophylaxis (i.e., prevention)

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.

- Avoid St. John's Wort
- Avoid antidepressants unless instructed by your doctor
- Do not take with ergotamine or ergot containing medications

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