



Bladder and Bowel Community Product Information

Medication for Overactive Bladder

The muscle in the wall of the bladder is called the detrusor muscle. It can sometimes contract in uncontrollable spasms, and this is often referred to as having an overactive or unstable bladder. The overactive detrusor muscle can cause an increase in the number of times you need to pass urine, uncontrollable urges to pass urine, or involuntary leakage of urine (urinary incontinence).

If bladder training alone does not substantially help improve the symptoms of Overactive Bladder, there are a number of medications available which can help control your bladder - thus reduce episodes of incontinence. These are called antimuscarinic or anticholinergic drugs and are available as tablets, as a liquid or as a patch.

Your doctor can prescribe medication which may help to reduce the overactive contractions of your bladder and improve your symptoms. These drugs can be very effective although like all drugs, they sometimes have side effects which can include;

- dry mouth,
- heartburn
- headaches
- constipation

Not everyone gets side effects and if they do, the majority of people only have mild problems. If the side effects become troublesome you should go back to your nurse or doctor to review these. People respond differently to medicines, and you may find that if one medicine causes troublesome side-effects, a switch to a different one may suit you better.

It is important once you start taking medication for your bladder that you continue for at least one month as it can take this long before they have the greatest effect on bladder symptoms, although many people do see an improvement in the first few days.

Below is a chart which looks at the medication available and their associated side effects – please note that the information in this chart is meant as a guide only. B&BC aims to provide up-to-date and accurate treatment information, however, no liability is accepted for any errors in the information presented. B&BC does not endorse any of the medications referred to in this list and it is essential that you talk to your doctor or continence nurse before taking any medication.

Generic name	Doses per day	Main side effects
Oxybutynin	3 times daily	Dry mouth, blurred vision, nausea, abdominal discomfort, constipation, indigestion
Oxybutynin XL	Once - daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, dizziness
Oxybutynin transdermal patch (worn on skin)	Transdermal patch releases medication	Rash or itching beneath the patch, Dry mouth or constipation
Betmiga	XL Once daily	An uncommon but serious side effect is irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation). This may affect up to 1 in 100 people. If this side effect occurs, immediately stop taking the medicine and

		seek urgent medical advice. Common side effects: Increased heart rate (tachycardia) -urinary tract infections - headaches -nausea
Darifenacin	Once - daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, blurred vision, dizziness
Fesoterodine	Once - daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, abdominal pain
Propiverine	Up to 3 times – daily and also available as once daily.	Dry mouth, blurred vision, drowsiness, constipation, nausea. tiredness
Solifenacin Succinate	Once - daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, abdominal pain
Tolterodine	Twice – daily	Dry mouth, constipation, abdominal pain, vomiting, dry skin
Tolterodine XL	XL One capsule - daily	
Trospium chloride	Twice - daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, abdominal pain
Trospium chloride XL	Once daily	Dry mouth, nausea, constipation, abdominal pain
Vaginal oestrogen	Amount and frequency will be set by GP	Breast tenderness, local irritation. The creams and pessaries may damage latex condoms and diaphragms.
Desmopressin - used to treat nocturnal Enuresis (bed wetting)and Nocturia for people with MS	– Once - nightly	Not for people over 65 with high blood pressure. Can cause headache, stomach pain and nausea

(XL* stands for extended release – for example ‘Tolterodine XL is released into the body over a longer period than Tolterodine).

Further Advice - eMC Medicine Guides

[eMC Medicine Guides](#) are an online medicines information resource for patients and the general public in the UK. Medicine Guides gives up to date, reliable and understandable information about medicines. They can help you to:

- make informed decisions about your health and healthcare
- be more involved in decisions about your treatment, in partnership with your healthcare professional
- understand how best to use and take your medicine

The Bladder and Bowel Community provides information and support for people with bladder and bowel issues. We publish a wide range of user friendly booklets and factsheets.

For more information please call us on 01926 357220, email help@bladderandbowel.org or write to us at The Bladder and Bowel Community, 7 The Court, Holywell Business Park, Northfield Road, Southam, CV47 0FS.

www.bladderandbowel.org

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