Package leaflet: Information for the user

Leflunomide Winthrop 10 mg film-coated tablets

leflunomide

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine because it contains important information for you.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you only. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their signs of illness are the same as yours.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

What is in this leaflet

1. What Leflunomide Winthrop is and what it is used for

Leflunomide Winthrop belongs to a group of medicines called anti-rheumatic medicines. It contains the active substance leflunomide.

Leflunomide Winthrop is used to treat adult patients with active rheumatoid arthritis or with active psoriatic arthritis.

Symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis include inflammation of joints, swelling, difficulty moving and pain. Other symptoms that affect the entire body include loss of appetite, fever, loss of energy and anaemia (lack of red blood cells).

Symptoms of active psoriatic arthritis include inflammation of joints, swelling, difficulty moving, pain and patches of red, scaly skin (skin lesions).

2. What you need to know before you take Leflunomide Winthrop

Do not take Leflunomide Winthrop

- if you have ever had an allergic reaction to leflunomide (especially a serious skin reaction, often accompanied by fever, joint pain, red skin stains, or blisters e.g. Stevens-Johnson syndrome) or to any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6),
- if you have any liver problems,
- if you have moderate to severe kidney problems,
- if you have severely low numbers of proteins in your blood (hypoproteinaemia),
- if you suffer from any problem which affects your immune system (e.g. AIDS),
- if you have any problem with your bone marrow, or if you have low numbers of red or white cells in your blood or a reduced number of blood platelets,
- if you are suffering from a serious infection,
- if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breast-feeding.

Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before taking Leflunomide Winthrop

- if you have ever suffered from tuberculosis or interstitial lung disease (lung disease),
- if you are male and wish to father a child. As it can not be excluded that Leflunomide Winthrop passes into semen, reliable contraception should be used during treatment with Leflunomide Winthrop. Men wishing to father a child should contact their doctor who may advise them to stop taking Leflunomide Winthrop and take certain medicines to remove Leflunomide Winthrop rapidly and sufficiently from their body. You will then need a blood test to make sure that Leflunomide Winthrop has been sufficiently removed from your body, and you should then wait for at least another 3 months before attempting to father a child.

Leflunomide Winthrop can occasionally cause some problems with your blood, liver, lungs, or nerves in your arms or legs. It may also cause some serious allergic reactions (including Drug Reaction with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms [DRESS]), or increase the chance of a severe infection. For more information on these, please read section 4 (Possible side effects).

DRESS appears initially as flu like symptoms and a rash on the face then an extended rash with a high temperature, increased levels of liver enzymes seen in blood tests and an increase in a type of white blood cell (eosinophilia) and enlarged lymph nodes.

Your doctor will carry out blood tests at regular intervals, before and during treatment with Leflunomide Winthrop, to monitor your blood cells and liver. Your doctor will also check your blood pressure regularly as Leflunomide Winthrop can cause an increase in blood pressure.

Children and adolescents

Leflunomide Winthrop is not recommended for use in children and adolescents below 18 years of age.

Other medicines and Leflunomide Winthrop

Please tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines.

This is especially important if you are taking:

- other medicines for rheumatoid arthritis such as antimalarials (e.g. chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine), intramuscular or oral gold, D penicillamine, azathioprine and other immunosuppressive drugs (e.g. methotrexate) as these combinations are not advisable,

- a medicine called colestyramine (used to reduce high cholesterol) or activated charcoal as these medicines can reduce the amount of Leflunomide Winthrop which is absorbed by the body,

- phenytoin (used to treat epilepsy), warfarin or phenprocoumon (used to thin the blood) or tolbutamide (used to treat type 2 diabetes) as these medicines may increase the risk of side effects.

If you are already taking a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) and/or corticosteroids, you may continue to take them after starting Leflunomide Winthrop.

Vaccinations

If you have to be vaccinated, ask your doctor for advice. Certain vaccinations should not be given while taking Leflunomide Winthrop, and for a certain amount of time after stopping treatment.

Leflunomide Winthrop with food, drink and alcohol

Leflunomide Winthrop may be taken with or without food.

It is not recommended to drink alcohol during treatment with Leflunomide Winthrop. Drinking alcohol while taking Leflunomide Winthrop may increase the chance of liver damage.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

Do not take Leflunomide Winthrop if you are, or think you may be pregnant. If you are pregnant or become pregnant while taking Leflunomide Winthrop, the risk of having a baby with serious birth defects is increased. Women of childbearing potential must not take Leflunomide Winthrop without using reliable contraceptive measures.

Tell your doctor if you plan to become pregnant after stopping treatment with Leflunomide Winthrop, as you need to ensure that all traces of Leflunomide Winthrop have left your body before trying to become pregnant. This may take up to 2 years. This may be reduced to a few weeks by taking certain medicines which speed up removal of Leflunomide Winthrop from your body.

In either case it should be confirmed by a blood test that Leflunomide Winthrop has been sufficiently removed from your body and you should then wait for at least another month before you become pregnant.

For further information on the laboratory testing please contact your doctor.

If you suspect that you are pregnant while taking Leflunomide Winthrop or in the two years after you have stopped treatment, you must contact your doctor immediately for a pregnancy test. If the test confirms that you are pregnant, your doctor may suggest treatment with certain medicines to remove Leflunomide Winthrop rapidly and sufficiently from your body, as this may decrease the risk to your baby.

Do not take Leflunomide Winthrop when you are breast-feeding, as leflunomide passes into the breast milk.

Driving and using machines

Leflunomide Winthrop can make you feel dizzy which may impair your ability to concentrate and react. If you are affected, do not drive, or use machines.

Leflunomide Winthrop contains lactose.

If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this medicine.

3. How to take Leflunomide Winthrop

Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

The usual starting dosage of Leflunomide Winthrop is one 100 mg tablet once daily for the first three days. After this, most patients need a dose of:

- For rheumatoid arthritis: 10 or 20 mg Leflunomide Winthrop once daily, depending on the severity of the disease.
- For psoriatic arthritis: 20 mg Leflunomide Winthrop once daily.

Swallow the tablet whole and with plenty of water.

It may take about 4 weeks or longer until you start to feel an improvement in your condition. Some patients may even still feel further improvements after 4 to 6 months of therapy.

You will normally take Leflunomide Winthrop over long periods of time.

If you take more Leflunomide Winthrop than you should

If you take more Leflunomide Winthrop than you should, contact your doctor or get other medical advice. If possible, take your tablets or the box with you to show the doctor.

If you forget to take Leflunomide Winthrop

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it is nearly time for your next dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Tell your doctor immediately and stop taking Leflunomide Winthrop:

- if you experience weakness, feel light-headed or dizzy or have difficulty breathing, as these may be signs of a serious allergic reaction,

- if you develop a skin rash or ulcers in your mouth, as these may indicate severe, sometimes life-threatening reactions (e.g. Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme, Drug Reaction with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms [DRESS]), see section 2.

Tell your doctor immediately if you experience:

- pale skin, tiredness, or bruising, as these may indicate blood disorders caused by an imbalance in the different types of blood cells which make up blood,

- tiredness, abdominal pain, or jaundice (yellow discolouration of the eyes or skin), as these may indicate serious conditions such as liver failure, which may be fatal,

- any symptoms of an infection such as fever, sore throat or cough, as this medicine may increase the chance of a severe infection which may be life-threatening,

- a cough or breathing problems as these may indicate inflammation of the lung (interstitial lung disease).

- unusual tingling, weakness or pain in your hands or feet as these may indicate problems with your nerves (peripheral neuropathy).

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)

- a slight decrease in the number of white blood cells (leucopenia),

- mild allergic reactions,

- loss of appetite, weight loss (usually insignificant),

- tiredness (asthenia),

- headache, dizziness,

- abnormal skin sensations like tingling (paraesthesia),

- mild increase in blood pressure,

- diarrhoea,

- nausea, vomiting,

- inflammation of the mouth or mouth ulcers,

- abdominal pain,

- an increase in some liver test results,

- increased hair loss,

- eczema, dry skin, rash, itching,
- tendonitis (pain caused by inflammation in the membrane surrounding the tendons usually in the feet or hands),
- an increase of certain enzymes in the blood (creatine phosphokinase),
- problems in the nerves of the arms or legs (peripheral neuropathy).

Uncommon side effects (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)

- a decrease in the number of red blood cells (anaemia) and a decrease in the number of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia),
- a decrease in the levels of potassium in the blood,
- anxiety,
- taste disturbances,
- urticaria (nettle rash),
- tendon rupture,
- an increase in the levels of fat in the blood (cholesterol and triglycerides),
- a decrease in the levels of phosphate in the blood.

Rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people)

- an increase in the numbers of blood cells called eosinophiles (eosinophilia); mild decrease in the number of white blood cells (leucopenia); decrease in the number of all blood cells (pancytopenia),
- severe increase in blood pressure,
- inflammation of the lung (interstitial lung disease),
- an increase in some liver results which may develop into serious conditions such as hepatitis and jaundice,
- severe infections called sepsis which may be fatal,
- an increase of certain enzymes in the blood (lactate dehydrogenase).

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)

- a marked decrease of some white blood cells (agranulocytosis),
- severe and potentially severe allergic reactions,
- inflammation of the small vessels (vasculitis, including cutaneous necrotizing vasculitis),
- inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis),
- severe liver injury such as liver failure or necrosis which may be fatal,
- severe sometimes life-threatening reactions (Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme).

Other side effects such as kidney failure, a decrease in the levels of uric acid in your blood, male infertility (which is reversible once treatment with this medicine is stopped), cutaneous lupus (characterized by rash/erythema on skin areas that are exposed to light), psoriasis (new or worsening), and DRESS may also occur with an unknown frequency.

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the national reporting system listed in Appendix V. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store Leflunomide Winthrop

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the packaging. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Blister: Store in the original package.

Bottle: Keep the container tightly closed.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

6. Contents of the pack and other information

What Leflunomide Winthrop contains

- The active substance is leflunomide. One film-coated tablet contains 10 mg of leflunomide.
- The other ingredients are: maize starch, povidone (E1201), crospovidone (E1202), silica colloidal anhydrous, magnesium stearate (E470b), and lactose monohydrate in the tablet core, as well as talc (E553b), hypromellose (E464), titanium dioxide (E171), and macrogol 8000 in the film-coating.

What Leflunomide Winthrop looks like and contents of the pack

Leflunomide Winthrop 10 mg film-coated tablets are white to almost white and round.

Imprint on one side: ZBN.

The tablets are packed in blisters or bottles.

Packs of 30 and 100 tablets are available.

Not all pack size may be marketed.

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