

Fluoroquinolone Patient Information Leaflet

Fluoroquinolones (Ciprofloxacin, Moxifloxacin, Ofloxacin) belong to a family of antibiotics that are used to treat bacterial infections. These antibiotics are important for treating certain infections where other antibiotics are not suitable.

In a small number of patients, fluoroquinolone antibiotics can cause serious side effects. These side effects can affect the joints, muscles, tendons and nerves in the body. Whilst these side effects are very rare, they can be serious, long lasting and in a minority of patients permanent. These potential side effects are listed below.

Joint and Movement Disorders

This may include pain, swelling, burning and numbness or weakness in your tendons. Especially in your ankle, calf and shoulder. You may have pins and needles or tingling in your limbs.

You may also experience weakness in parts of your body.

Sensory

You may experience changes in your vision, taste, smell and hearing.

If you have a history of epilepsy or seizures, increased seizure activity can occur.

Mood Changes

You may experience changes in your mood such as feeling depressed and anxious, be extremely tired and have problems with your sleep as well as memory issues. Feeling suicidal has been reported.

Cardiac symptoms

Symptoms can include chest pain, difficulty breathing and palpitations.

If you develop any of these symptoms it is important to stop your medication, rest the affected areas of your body if applicable and contact a doctor immediately. If our clinic is closed you should call 111 for advice.

All antibiotics can cause gastro intestinal symptoms such as diarrhoea. These often resolve after a few days. Contact the clinic if they persist.

Food interactions

Dairy products, such as milk or yoghurt, or drinks with added calcium may reduce the absorption of fluoroquinolones. Do not take these at the same time.

Drug interactions

Due to the increased risk of side effects, please discuss with your doctor / pharmacist before starting fluoroquinolones if you are taking any of the following;

- Blood thinning medication e.g. Warfarin or Heparin
- Heart medicines for irregular heart rhythms e.g. amiodarone)
- Psychiatric medication e.g. haloperidol
- Anti-depressants
- Anti-histamines e.g. Terfenadine
- Epilepsy medication e.g. Phenytoin

Avoid taking the following at the same time of the day as the following medicines as they reduce the absorption of fluoroquinolones. Take them 6 hours apart.

- Antacids
- Mineral supplements
- Sucralfate
- Polymeric phosphate binder (e.g. Sevelemer)
- Medicines containing calcium, aluminium, magnesium or iron

You are more at risk of side effects if you are:

- Over 60
- Have problems with your kidneys
- Have received an organ transplant
- You are currently taking steroid medication

It's important to remember that feeling unwell and having joint/ movement problems can be caused by other events than your medications. Serious complications are rare and there are many benefits to receiving these medications.

Always read the leaflet that comes with your medications, if you have any concerns, speak to your clinician or a pharmacist for advice.

The tablets should be swallowed whole and can be taken with or without food.

They should not be taken if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.