



Facts about skin reactions with lamotrigine (Lamictal[®], Gen-Lamotrigine[®], Apo-Lamotrigine[®])

LAMICTAL(lamotrigine) Tablets



LAMICTAL(lamotrigine) Chewable Dispersible Tablets



Lamotrigine (Lamictal[®], Gen-Lamotrigine[®], Apo-Lamotrigine[®]) is a medication originally developed by the company GlaxoSmithKline to treat patients with epilepsy. Later, studies showed that it could be used as a mood stabilizer for the treatment of patients with bipolar disorder and other psychiatric conditions.

Lamotrigine is a medication that is generally tolerated well. Taking lamotrigine has been associated with an increased incidence of skin reactions.

In studies with lamotrigine, approximately 5 percent of patients receiving a placebo (sugar pill) developed a skin rash, compared with approximately 10 percent of patients receiving lamotrigine.

Some of the skin reactions are like ones that can happen with other medications, such as hives (also known as urticaria) and a red raised rash with or without small liquid filled vesicles (sometimes called erythema multiforme). These rashes are not usually harmful.

Rarely, potentially harmful skin reactions can occur, the most serious of which are called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS) and Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (TEN). Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether a skin reaction is going to be harmful or not, and your doctor needs to consider stopping lamotrigine treatment if any kind of skin reaction occurs.

Initial research found that an increased risk of skin reactions occurred in patients under the age of 18 and when lamotrigine was used at the same time as another epilepsy medication and mood stabilizer, valproate (due to a drug interaction that led to increased blood levels of lamotrigine). Many of the patients under 18 were taking valproate, and other medications for seizures that also have an increased risk of causing skin reactions.

If the risk of skin rash from any cause can be reduced, the risk that lamotrigine would be stopped when it did not need to be stopped could also be reduced. This gives the person the best chance to benefit from taking lamotrigine.

Some of the ways to reduce the risk of any kind of skin rash occurring during the initial 3 months of treatment with lamotrigine include:

- **DO NOT** start other new medications
- **DO NOT** start eating new foods
- **DO NOT** use new cosmetics, conditioners, deodorants, detergents or fabric softeners
- Wear an appropriate sunscreen to avoid sunburn
- Take precautions to avoid Poison Oak/Poison Ivy exposure
- **DO NOT** start lamotrigine within 2 weeks of having a rash, viral syndrome or vaccination

If you develop a rash accompanied by eye, mouth or bladder discomfort, go to the emergency room for immediate assessment, and make sure to tell the doctor that you have recently started taking lamotrigine.

If you develop a rash without the above symptoms, see your doctor as soon as possible (before taking the next dose of lamotrigine) to assess the risk of continuing treatment with lamotrigine.

Adjust the dosage of lamotrigine slowly upwards as directed by your doctor. **DO NOT** stop and restart this medication or miss doses of lamotrigine, as this can possibly trigger a rash to occur. If you miss taking lamotrigine for more than 3 days, contact your doctor for advice on how to safely restart taking lamotrigine.



Ministry of
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