

SPIRONOLACTONE

Your doctor has prescribed you/your child a medication called spironolactone (available as Aldactone™ and TEVA-spironolactone). This medication is used in several conditions to block the effect of androgens (male hormones). The primary use of spironolactone in our Endocrinology and Gender Clinics is to prevent unwanted hair growth.

Spironolactone is available as 25- and 100-milligram tablets. The 100-milligram tablets are scored and can be cut in half. The use of a pill cutter may make this easier.

The dose of spironolactone used can vary, depending on the type of patient, the level of male hormones in the blood, and the amount of unwanted hair. The usual dosage for patients with extra body hair is 50-200 mg daily. This may be divided into 1 or 2 doses a day. In certain patients, a dosage of up to 300-400 mg a day may be needed. Your physician may suggest starting with a small dose and working your way up to a full dose over several weeks, to limit side-effects.

Here is an example of dosing schedule for a person who will be taking 200 milligrams twice a day:

	Morning Dose	Evening Dose
Week 1	—	$\frac{1}{2}$ pill (50 mg)
Week 2	$\frac{1}{2}$ pill (50 mg)	$\frac{1}{2}$ pill (50 mg)
Week 3	$\frac{1}{2}$ pill (50 mg)	1 pill (100 mg)
Week 4	1 pill (100 mg)	1 pill (100 mg)
Week 5	blood test (if requested)	

Common side-effects include nausea, tiredness, dizziness, nighttime urination, and headache. These are generally mild and decrease with time. Spironolactone can cause irregular menstrual cycles in assigned females and breast development in assigned males.

Spironolactone can cause elevations of the potassium level in the blood. Your doctor may suggest you have a blood test after starting the medication to check this (see above). You should not use potassium supplements, or salt substitutes containing potassium.

Rarely, other serious side-effects can occur. These should be reported to your doctor right away, and you should stop the spironolactone in the meantime. You should not take spironolactone if you have serious liver or kidney problems. Spironolactone can interact with digoxin, lithium and other blood pressure medications. Alcohol can increase dizziness in patients taking spironolactone.

If you are vomiting with a viral illness, you should discontinue the spironolactone until you are able to keep down liquids.

SPIRONOLACTONE MUST NOT BE TAKEN IF YOU ARE PREGNANT, AS IT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS SIDE-EFFECTS IN THE FETUS. Sexually active people who can become pregnant and are taking spironolactone **MUST** use protection against pregnancy.

Please let your Endocrinologist or Endocrine/Gender Nurse know if you have any further questions about this medication.