

Lariam®

Mefloquine hydrochloride

250 mg tablets

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Lariam tablets.

It does not contain all the available information.

It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking Lariam tablets against the benefits expected for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

You may need to read it again.

What Lariam is used for

Lariam contains the active ingredient mefloquine.

Lariam is used for the treatment and prevention of malaria, particularly malaria caused by the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite resistant to other anti-malarial medicines. It can also be used as a stand-by treatment to be carried by the traveller and taken for suspected malaria when prompt medical attention is not available within 24 hours or more.

Lariam belongs to a group of medicines called quinolones (pronounced *kwin-o-lones*).

Lariam works by killing the parasites that may cause or have caused malaria.

Where and how you can contract malaria

Malaria is an infectious disease that is widespread in tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, Latin America, Asia and countries around the Pacific. There are different forms of malaria, each of them caused by a specific parasite transmitted to humans by the bite of the Anopheles mosquito.

Precautions against malaria

The best protection against malaria is to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquito that causes malaria mainly bites between dusk and dawn. Therefore, the following precautionary measures are recommended:

- during this period, wear light-coloured clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible.
- apply mosquito repellent to your uncovered skin and to your clothes.
- when sleeping in rooms that are not protected against mosquitoes, use an effective mosquito net well tucked under the mattress.
- additional protection is provided by smoke spirals, insect sprays and candles.

Symptoms of malaria

The symptoms of malaria may often be mild. However, malaria should be suspected if, after one week in a malarial area, you suffer unexplained fever with or without other symptoms such as headache, aching limbs, weakness, shaking, chills, and sometimes diarrhoea, vomiting and cough. These symptoms can easily be confused with influenza.

If these symptoms are due to the most dangerous form of malaria caused by the falciparum parasite, and they are not treated in time, severe organ damage, loss of consciousness and death can occur within a short period. The less dangerous forms of malaria, which are not life threatening, can break out months or even years after the end of a stay in a malarial area.

Diagnosis and treatment of malaria

Early diagnosis is critical for successful treatment. Anyone suspected of having malaria should seek medical attention promptly and request that a blood sample be taken and examined microscopically for malaria parasites.

Most tourists and business travellers will normally be able to receive medical attention. However, if this is not readily available, anti-malarial treatment can be self-administered ('stand-by treatment').

Consult your doctor about the need to carry 'stand-by treatment' on your trip. Medical advice should still be sought after self-administered treatment.

There are many different types of medicines used for the treatment and prevention of malaria.

Your doctor may have prescribed Lariam for another purpose.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why Lariam has been prescribed for you.

Experience with Lariam in infants less than 3 months old or weighing less than 5 kg is limited. In this situation, your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of using Lariam with you.

Lariam is not addictive.

This medicine is available only with a doctor's prescription.

Before you use Lariam

When you must not take Lariam

Do not take Lariam:

- 1. if you have had an allergic reaction to mefloquine or related compounds quinine and quinidine**
- 2. as a preventative medicine if you have a history of convulsions (epileptic-type fits)**
- 3. as a preventative medicine if you:**
 - are currently depressed or**
 - have a history of serious mental illness**

Some people who take Lariam may have sudden serious mental problems. Symptoms of serious mental problems may include:

- severe anxiety
- hallucinations
- depression
- feeling restless
- unusual behaviour
- feeling confused

- 4. if you have had an allergic reaction to any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet**

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- rash, itching or hives on the skin.

- 5. if the package is torn or shows signs of tampering**
- 6. if the expiry date printed on the pack has passed. If you take this medicine after the expiry date has passed, it may not work as well.**

If you are not sure if you should be taking Lariam, talk to your doctor.

Before you start to take Lariam

Tell your doctor if:

- 1. you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant**

If there is a need to take Lariam during pregnancy, particularly during the first three months, your doctor will discuss with you the risks and benefits of taking it.

2. you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed

Lariam passes into breast milk, therefore, your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of taking Lariam if you are breast-feeding.

3. you have or have had any other health problems, especially the following:

- epilepsy (fits or seizures) or convulsions
- liver disease
- malaria

4. you have recently had a vaccination

5. if you are allergic to any other medicines, foods, dyes or preservatives

6. you react badly to lactose or milk

Lariam tablets contain lactose. If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this medicinal product.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, do so before you start taking Lariam.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you have bought from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Especially tell your doctor if you are taking (or have taken recently):

- halofantrine, a medicine used to treat malaria
- ketoconazole, an antifungal medicine
- quinine, a medicine used for malaria or cramps
- quinidine, a medicine used to treat heart problems

These medicines must not be taken with Lariam or after Lariam has been taken. It may cause serious heart problems.

Other medicines that may interfere with Lariam are:

- chloroquine, a medicine used to treat or prevent malaria
- rifampicin, a medicine used to treat infections
- medicines used to treat fits (epilepsy) such as valproic acid, carbamazepine, phenobarbital and phenytoin
- some medicines used to treat, or prevent irregular heartbeat
- medicines used to treat high blood pressure (e.g. a group of medicines called beta-blockers)
- some medicines used to treat depression and other mental disorders
- some antihistamines
- medicines used to lower blood-sugar (treat diabetes)
- medicines used to prevent blood clots

- 'live' vaccines. You should not be vaccinated against typhoid with live vaccine while taking Lariam. Vaccination with 'live' vaccines should be completed at least three days before the first dose of Lariam. Discuss this with your doctor if you are not sure which vaccines are 'live'.

These medicines may be affected by Lariam, or may affect how well it works. You may need to take different amounts of your medicine, or you may need to take different medicines. Your doctor will advise you.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while being treated with Lariam.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about this list of medicines.

How to use Lariam

Follow all directions given to you by your doctor or pharmacist carefully.

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

How much Lariam to take

Take Lariam exactly as your doctor has prescribed.

Your doctor will tell you how many Lariam tablets to take and when to take them.

Prevention of malaria

The usual dose for people weighing 45 kg or more is one Lariam tablet once a week. People weighing less than 45 kg may need to have their weekly dose reduced. Your doctor will tell you what dose is right for you.

Take the first tablet one week before you arrive in a malarial area. Continue to take one tablet each week *on the same day* while you are in a malarial area, and each week for 4 weeks after you have left a malarial area.

If you are unable to take Lariam one week before entering a malarial area, your doctor may give you different dosage instructions.

Treatment of malaria (including stand-by treatment)

The usual dose for people weighing between 45 kg and 60 kg is five Lariam tablets. Three tablets should be taken initially and the remaining 2 tablets should be taken 6 to 8 hours later.

The usual dose for people weighing more than 60 kg is six Lariam tablets. Three tablets should be taken initially, a further two tablets 6 to 8 hours later and the remaining one tablet a further 6 to 8 hours after that.

People weighing less than 45 kg may need to have their dose reduced. Your doctor will tell you what dose is right for you.

If you have previously been in a malarial area you may require a lower dose of Lariam. Your doctor will advise you.

If you vomit less than 30 minutes after taking your dose of Lariam, you should repeat this dose.

If you vomit 30 to 60 minutes after a dose, an additional half-dose should be taken e.g. if you took three tablets and vomited you should take an additional 1½ tablets.

If you have to take stand-by treatment, it is important that you seek medical attention as soon as possible, even if you feel you have fully recovered.

How to take Lariam

Swallow tablets whole with at least one glass of water.

The tablets may be crushed or suspended in a small amount of water, milk or other drink for administration to children and people unable to swallow the tablets whole.

When to take Lariam

For prevention of malaria, always take Lariam on the same day each week, after your main meal.

How long to take Lariam

Continue taking Lariam until your doctor tells you to stop.

The length of therapy will depend on whether Lariam is used for treatment or prevention of malaria.

If you forget to take Lariam

If you forget to take the second or third dose during treatment of malaria, take it as soon as you remember and contact your doctor.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

For prevention of malaria, you must take Lariam once weekly *always on the same day*. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then go back to taking it as you would normally once a week.

If you think you may have trouble remembering your dose, ask your pharmacist for some hints.

While you are using Lariam

Things you must do

Tell all doctors, dentists and pharmacists who are treating you that you are taking Lariam.

Tell your doctor immediately if you become pregnant while taking Lariam.

Women of child-bearing potential should use effective contraception while taking Lariam and for at least three months after taking the last dose.

Tell your doctor if, for any reason, you have not taken your medicine exactly as prescribed.

Otherwise, your doctor may think that it was not effective and change your treatment unnecessarily.

If you are taking Lariam for the treatment of malaria, tell your doctor if you feel the tablets are not helping your condition.

If you are taking Lariam for the treatment of malaria, be sure to keep all of your appointments with your doctor so that your progress can be checked.

Things you must not do

Do not stop taking Lariam or change the dose without first checking with your doctor.

Do not let yourself run out of Lariam over the weekend or on holidays.

Do not give Lariam to anyone else even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not use Lariam to treat other complaints unless your doctor says to.

Do not take any other medicines whether they require a prescription or not without first telling your doctor or consulting a pharmacist.

Things to be careful of

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how Lariam affects you.

Lariam may cause dizziness, drowsiness or loss of balance in some people. Make sure you know how you react to Lariam before you drive a car, operate machinery, or do anything else that could be dangerous if you are dizzy or drowsy. If you drink alcohol, dizziness or drowsiness may be worse.

These effects may occur for several weeks after stopping Lariam.

In case of overdose

If you take too much (overdose)

Immediately telephone your doctor or National Poisons Information Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766) for advice, or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency centre, if

you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much Lariam. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

You may need urgent medical attention.

If you take too much Lariam, some of the symptoms which may or may not occur are listed in the Side effects section of this leaflet.

Keep telephone numbers for these places handy.

If you are not sure what to do, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking Lariam.

Lariam helps most people but it may have unwanted side effects in some people.

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects.

When Lariam is used for treatment of malaria, side effects may occur more often than when it is used for prevention of malaria.

If you are taking Lariam for the treatment of malaria, you may not be able to distinguish between the symptoms of malaria and the side effects of Lariam.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting
- diarrhoea, pain in the stomach
- dizziness, vertigo (sense of spinning) or loss of balance; may continue for months after Lariam is stopped
- headache
- itching
- insomnia (inability to sleep)

These are the most frequent side effects. They are generally mild and may decrease with continued use of Lariam.

Tell your doctor immediately or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency centre if you experience any of the following:

- abnormal or strange dreams; which may continue after Lariam is stopped
- change in mood - for example (bipolar disorder), excitement, depression, restlessness, confusion, agitation, aggression, feeling anxious or nervous, irrational ideas, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts or panic attacks; which may also occur after Lariam is stopped

- a seizure (fit), convulsion
- irregular or racing heartbeat, chest pain
- light-headedness
- fatigue, flushing
- loss of consciousness
- problems with your eyes such as blurred vision or eye pain
- hearing disturbances
- tremor
- fever, sweating or chills
- muscle pain, cramps or weakness
- joint pain
- difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, coughing or wheezing
- tingling in fingers and toes
- severe rash, blisters or bleeding in the lips, eyes, mouth, nose or genitals
- sudden tiredness, dizziness or sudden shortness of breath
- yellowing of the skin or the eyes.

These are serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention. Serious side effects are rare.

This is not a complete list of all possible side effects. Others may occur in some people and there may be some side effects not yet known.

Tell your doctor if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell, even if it is not on this list.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand anything in this list.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible side effects. You may not experience any of them.

After using Lariam

Storage

Keep your tablets in the blister pack until it is time to take them. If you take the tablets out of the blister pack they will not keep well.

Keep Lariam in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 30 °C.

Do not store Lariam, or any other medicine, in a bathroom or near a sink.

Do not leave it in the car or on window sills.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep Lariam where young children cannot reach it.

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Disposal

If your doctor tells you to stop taking Lariam, or the tablets have passed their expiry date, ask your pharmacist what to do with any tablets that are left over.

Product description

Availability

Lariam is supplied as a pack of 8 tablets; each tablet strength is 250 mg.

What Lariam looks like

The tablets are white, cylindrical, and marked with "RO", "C", "HE" and an imprinted hexagon on one side. They are cross-scored so that they can be easily broken into halves or into quarters.

Ingredients

Active ingredient

- mefloquine

Each Lariam tablet contains 250 mg mefloquine as mefloquine hydrochloride.

Inactive ingredients

- microcrystalline cellulose, lactose, maize starch, crospovidone, ammonium calcium alginate, talc, magnesium stearate, poloxamer 3800.

Lariam tablets contain lactose. If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this medicinal product.

Sponsor Details

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