

Levetiracetam

Keppra · Keppra XR is extended-release

A medicine for certain seizures. Keep a steady routine and speak up about mood changes.

From Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC's education collection ·

Draft for review · Clinical content has not been revalidated for this website.

CHECK IR OR XR

DO NOT STOP SUDDENLY

Your product, kidneys and seizure type determine the dose. Follow your own prescription.

What it is used for

Levetiracetam helps prevent certain seizures. It may be used alone or with other seizure medicines, depending on the seizure type.

It is not an established treatment for bipolar disorder or anxiety. If prescribed for another reason, ask what benefit your team expects.

How it works

It attaches to a protein involved in how brain cells release chemical messages. This may help reduce the activity that leads to seizures.

The exact process is not fully understood. This diagram does not mean the medicine treats every condition involving those signals.

What to expect over time

FIRST DAYS

Take each dose on time. Sleepiness or dizziness may appear.

NEXT FEW WEEKS

Your team reviews seizures, side effects and any dose increases.

ONGOING

Keep a seizure record and refill early. Feeling well is not a reason to stop.

Taking your medication

Regular tablets are usually taken twice daily; XR is usually once daily. Take with or without food at consistent times.

Swallow Keppra tablets whole. Do not crush, chew or break XR. Ask your pharmacist about any different product or swallowing difficulty.

Follow the written dose-change schedule. Do not switch IR and XR, add doses or move all doses to bedtime on your own.

When to get help

Call 911: trouble breathing, throat/tongue swelling, collapse or inability to wake. Stop the medicine for a severe allergic reaction and get emergency care.

Get urgent advice: a new rash, blistering/peeling skin, fever or swollen glands, even without a rash. Seek instructions before another dose.

Call your team immediately: new suicidal thoughts, hallucinations or dangerous aggression. Call 911 for immediate danger; follow your emergency seizure plan.

Early side effects

Sleepiness, dizziness, tiredness, headache, upset stomach or unsteadiness can occur. Report falls or persistent slowing. Do not drive until your team says it is safe and you know your response.

Other effects to discuss

New anger, irritability, anxiety or depression deserves a call, not blame. Someone close to you may notice changes first. Tell your team promptly if you do not feel like yourself.

What to keep track of

Track seizures, missed doses, mood, sleepiness and balance. Your team may check kidney function. Blood counts or drug levels are used when there is a specific reason, not automatically at every visit.

Before you start

Tell your team about kidney disease or dialysis, allergies, falls, depression, aggression, suicidal thoughts or unusual experiences such as hearing voices. Bring all medicines and supplements. Discuss pregnancy or nursing. Ask for a written seizure-action plan and make sure someone you trust knows how to use it.

Medicines & interactions

Alcohol

Avoid alcohol until you have discussed it with your seizure team. It can worsen sleepiness and make seizure care harder.

Sleep & anxiety medicines

Opioids, benzodiazepines, sleep aids and sedating allergy medicines can add impairment. Check combinations; do not stop other prescribed medicines yourself.

Other seizure medicines

Keep the agreed schedule for every medicine. A new product or prescription change should be checked with your pharmacist or seizure team.

New medicines or illness

Tell every clinician you take levetiracetam. Kidney changes can affect the dose; report new marked sleepiness, confusion or imbalance.

Everyday tips

Use reminders and refill before you run out.

Keep a short seizure and side-effect record.

Ask a trusted person to watch for mood changes.

Protect sleep and follow your seizure-safety plan.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss a dose?

Take it when remembered unless nearly time for the next; then skip it. Never double. Ask your pharmacist if unsure, especially with once-daily XR.

Can I stop when seizures improve?

Not on your own. Sudden stopping can trigger more or prolonged seizures. Your team will plan a gradual change unless a serious reaction requires urgent action.

Does needing a taper mean addiction?

No. Levetiracetam is not generally habit-forming. The taper protects against seizures; it is not evidence that you have an addiction.

What about pregnancy or nursing?

Contact your team before pregnancy or as soon as you know. Do not stop suddenly. Levels may change during pregnancy; nursing needs an individual review and observation of the baby.

Storage & safety

Store securely at room temperature, away from moisture and children. Never share. For an overdose, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 right away. Call 911 for breathing trouble, collapse, inability to wake or a seizure emergency under your action plan.

About this information

For general information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice. This sheet does not cover every risk or interaction. Ask your prescriber or pharmacist before changing how you take this medication.

Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/lookup.cfm?setid=3ca9df05-a506-4ec8-a4fe-320f1219ab21>
 2. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=2919e43b-69a8-434c-a2d2-1f3ecd7554c0>
 3. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a699059.html>
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Educational inclusion does not mean this medication or its indications are treated at this practice. Review the guide for your exact product with your prescriber or pharmacist.

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Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC