

Rivastigmine

Exelon Patch • capsules also available

Support for thinking and daily activities in certain dementias. This guide covers capsules and the daily patch.

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

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

ONE PATCH AT A TIME

REMOVE OLD BEFORE NEW

AChE and BuChE are enzymes that break down a brain messenger. Blocking them does not cure dementia.

What it is used for

For dementia caused by Alzheimer disease or Parkinson disease. The patch can also be used in severe Alzheimer dementia.

Sometimes used for dementia with Lewy bodies, which is off-label in the US. Ask what benefit your team is looking for.

How it works

Helps a brain messenger called acetylcholine stay available longer. This may support memory, thinking and everyday tasks.

Benefits vary and may be small. This is not proof that the underlying disease has slowed or that lost abilities will return.

What to expect over time

START LOW

Your team raises the dose slowly only if you tolerate it.

EARLY CHECKS

Report poor intake, vomiting, dizziness or more shaking.

OVER MONTHS

Compare daily abilities and treatment burden with your team.

Taking your medication

Capsules: take the prescribed dose with breakfast and the evening meal. Do not take capsules while wearing a patch.

Daily patch: remove the old one first. Apply one new patch at the same time daily to clean, dry, unbroken skin on the back, upper arm or chest. Press for 30 seconds. No creams underneath; never cut patches.

Change spots daily; wait 14 days before reusing one. Wash hands after handling. Ask for an application demonstration.

When to get help

Call promptly: repeated vomiting or diarrhea, poor intake, weight loss, worsening tremor or difficulty passing urine.

Remove the patch and call: a rash spreading beyond it, marked swelling or blisters. A reaction not improving within 48 hours after removal also needs review.

Get emergency help: fainting with a slow pulse, chest pain, black stools or bloody vomit. Call 911 for seizure, collapse or severe breathing trouble.

Early side effects

Nausea, diarrhea, stomach upset and poor appetite often occur during dose changes. Dizziness, headache, sweating and sleep changes are possible. Call about persistent symptoms; do not increase through them.

Other effects to discuss

Watch weight, hydration and balance. The patch may upset the stomach less than capsules, but it can still cause serious symptoms. Mild local redness can happen; spreading or blistering reactions are different.

What to keep track of

Your team checks pulse, weight, daily function and side effects. Bring a dose or patch log. Blood tests or a heart tracing depend on your health history; routine drug-level testing is not needed.

Before you start

Share any history of fainting, slow heartbeat, ulcers or bleeding, breathing disease, seizures, urinary problems, liver or kidney disease and skin allergies. Mention pregnancy or breastfeeding if relevant. Tell the surgery, dental or MRI team about the medicine and patch before a procedure.

Medicines & interactions

Heart and movement medicines

Beta-blockers may slow the pulse further. Metoclopramide may worsen movement problems. Have these combinations checked.

Bladder, allergy or sleep medicines

Some block acetylcholine and work against rivastigmine. Include nonprescription products on your medication list.

Pain and dementia medicines

Aspirin or NSAIDs may add bleeding risk. Do not add another cholinesterase inhibitor or combine oral rivastigmine with a patch on your own.

Everyday tips

Have one clear plan for who gives each dose.

Record patch removal and the new application site.

Keep familiar routines and safe walking areas.

Report changes in eating, drinking and useful activities.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss a dose?

Capsule: take it when remembered unless the next dose is near; never double. Daily patch: remove any old patch and apply one new patch, then change it at the usual time the next day. After several days off, call before restarting; the dose may need to start low again.

How do I care for the patch?

If it falls off, apply a new one elsewhere and change it at your usual time. Never wear two. Avoid heating pads, saunas and prolonged direct sun on it. Keep patches sealed until use.

What if I use too much?

Remove all patches and call Poison Control now: 1-800-222-1222, even if you feel well. Do not take more or apply a new patch until advised. Extra doses can be dangerous.

Can I stop or drive?

Discuss stopping first; the team may lower the dose and watch for worsening symptoms. Never cut patches to taper. Dementia and side effects can affect driving, so review safety with your team.

Storage & safety

Store at room temperature away from heat and moisture. Fold used patches sticky sides together, return to the pouch and discard safely away from children and pets. Used patches still contain medicine. Ask about disposal of unused supplies.

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://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a602009.html>
 2. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a607078.html>
 3. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/lookup.cfm?setid=8b809739-8381-4cc1-ab4a-5b17ab902a3d>
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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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