

Cholesterol Absorption Inhibitor Ezetimibe (Ezetrol)

What is Ezetimibe (Ezetrol)?

Ezetimibe (Ezetrol) is a cholesterol absorption inhibitor that works by decreasing the absorption of cholesterol in the small intestine. This leads to a decrease in the delivery of cholesterol to the liver which allows more cholesterol to be cleared from the blood. Ezetimibe (Ezetrol) may be taken alone or with other cholesterol lowering medications such as “statins”.

Who should take Ezetimibe (Ezetrol)?

Individuals who benefit from taking this medication include those who have one or more of the following:

- Not reaching their cholesterol/lipid targets on maximal doses of other medications
- Unable to tolerate other cholesterol medications because of liver, muscle, or other side effects

What should I know before taking this medication?

This medication should be used as part of a program that includes changes in lifestyle (such as increasing exercise, following a cholesterol lowering diet, weight management and quitting smoking). Ezetimibe (Ezetrol) is generally well tolerated, however it is not suitable for some people.

Inform your doctor if you:

- have liver disease.
- are pregnant or planning to get pregnant.
- are breast feeding.
- have taken Ezetimibe (Ezetrol) before and developed a reaction.
- are taking other prescription or nonprescription medications.

How should I take this medication?

It is important to take your medication regularly as prescribed by your doctor. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed one and just take the next dose. **Do not take a double dose.**

- Take this medication at the same time each day with or without food.
- If you develop symptoms of fever, weakness, fatigue, headache, or muscle pain, stop taking the medication and call the doctor who prescribed it.
- If you are taking a resin such as cholestyramine (Questran), it should be taken at least 2 hours before or 4 hours after taking Ezetimibe (Ezetrol).

What are the common side effects of this medication?

The most common side effects related to the use of Ezetimibe (Ezetrol) include stomach irritation, headache, abdominal pain, constipation or diarrhoea.

In addition, if you are also taking a “statin” medication the following are possible side effects you may experience: headache, fatigue, abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, muscle weakness and alterations in some laboratory values.

You should stop the “statin” drug and contact your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:

- muscle tenderness or soreness
- unexplained muscle pain
- general malaise, fatigue and weakness
- fever

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

This information is provided to you by the Healthy Heart Program, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, British Columbia.
If you would like more information, please contact us at 604-806-5591.