



# Clonidine for menopausal symptoms

Menopause is a normal event, but some women have troublesome symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats. Currently the most effective treatment is menopausal hormone therapy (MHT). Clonidine is a non-hormonal treatment that may be prescribed for women who need to or want to avoid MHT.

## Why have you been prescribed clonidine?

Clonidine is a medication that lowers blood pressure and may be used to prevent migraine headache. It also reduces menopausal hot flushes.

## Before you take clonidine

Tell your doctor if you are;

- ▶ Allergic to clonidine
- ▶ Taking other medications or herbal products, in particular:
  - Medicines for high blood pressure
  - Medicines for heart problems
  - Alcohol
  - Medicines used to control mood swings and some types of depression
  - Medicines used to relieve pain, swelling or other symptoms of inflammation.

## How to take clonidine

The usual starting dose is 25 micrograms (quarter of a tablet) two times a day. The dose can be increased to 50 micrograms two times a day. If needed, your doctor may increase to a total daily dose of 150 micrograms.

1. Swallow the tablets with a full glass of water.
2. Take your medicine at about the same time each day so it will have the best effect.
3. Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.

## What are the side effects

The more frequently reported side effects of clonidine are light-headedness when you stand up suddenly, drowsiness, dryness of the mouth, nausea and vomiting. This feeling often disappears after a few days.

Other less frequently reported side effects include:

- ▶ Constipation
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Sleep disturbances
- ▶ Blurred vision

- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Rash/hives/itching
- ▶ Dryness of the nose and eyes
- ▶ Slow or irregular heartbeat
- ▶ Blood glucose increased

Other side effects listed may also occur in some people. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything unusual during or after taking clonidine

## When will you see an improvement in symptoms?

A trial of 2 to 4 weeks is needed to assess if clonidine is effective. If there is no significant reduction in hot flushes, the medication will need to be reviewed.

## How to stop taking clonidine?

If you decide to or your doctor tells you to stop taking clonidine, you should reduce the dose gradually over a period of a week or more to avoid a sudden increase in your blood pressure. Speak with your doctor about how to do this.

## When should you see your doctor?

If this information does not answer your questions or you experience adverse effects from the treatment, please see your GP or contact Menopause Clinic nurse on (08) 6458 2222 pager 3358 (Monday – Wednesday).



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