

A mood stabiliser

Lithium (lith-ee-um)

You should read this leaflet with your carer/care giver.



Lithium:

- Is also called *Camcolit, Lithonate, Liskonum, Priadel* or *Li-liquid*.
- Come as tablets or liquid.

- Lithium is used for manic depressive disorder.
- Lithium is sometimes used for people who are distressed. There is no clear evidence that it improves someone's behaviour.

The label on your lithium packet should tell you when and how much medicine to take.

Swallow your tablet or capsule with water,

Or,

Measure and swallow the liquid.

If you forget to take your medicine, tell someone straight away.

You should carry on taking your medicine even if you feel better unless your doctor asks you to stop.



Drinking alcohol whilst taking lithium could make you feel sleepy.

Some medicines do not work well together.

You should tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking.

Regular blood tests must be done for:

- Full blood count, urea and electrolytes, kidney function, thyroid function and blood lithium level.

Side effects:

- Medicine can have certain effects on your body that are not wanted.
- Not everyone taking a medicine will get them.
- Many will go away with time.
- Many are rare.

You might want to talk to your doctor or the pharmacist or your key worker if you have any side effect.

These are some (but NOT all) side effects of lithium...

- Feeling sleepy or sluggish
- Headache
- Feeling sick or being sick
- Swollen ankles or feet
- Needing the toilet a lot
- Fine shaking in the hands





- Putting on weight (check weight regularly)
- A dry mouth or feeling very thirsty

Some side effects are more serious.

You should tell someone straight away if you have...

- Dizziness or feel faint
- Strong twitches especially in your legs or jaw
- Confusion or your mind feels mixed up and you find it hard to think
- Slurred speech
- Feel unsteady on your feet or feel clumsy
- Fit or seizure



You should talk to your doctor before you stop taking your medicine.

Sometimes, if you stop taking your medicine, you may have:

- Sleep problems
- Anxiety





This leaflet does not tell you everything about lithium.

You can get more information from:

- your pharmacist, doctor, nurse or carer/ care giver
- check <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/cnw/>
- NHS on 111
- medicine information helpline on 020 3317 5090.

This leaflet can be downloaded free of charge from:

<https://spectrom.wixsite.com/project/>

While preparing this leaflet we checked information in...

- The British National Formulary (www.bnf.org)
- Dulcan, M. K., & Ballard, R. (2015). *Helping parents and teachers understand medications for behavioural and emotional problems: A resource book of medication information handouts*. American Psychiatric Publishing, Washington DC, USA.

This leaflet is not designed for people with intellectual disabilities to read on their own. Support (care) staff or care givers should go through the leaflet with the person who has intellectual disabilities.

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