

Oral magnesium supplementation

This leaflet has been provided to give you some of the important information you need about taking oral magnesium supplements. Please read this leaflet carefully before you start and keep it in a safe place as you may need to refer to it again. If you have any questions or if you are unsure about anything, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

What it is used for

Magnesium is essential for your body's health. It helps maintain teeth and bones and is needed for the transmission of nerve impulses and the contractions of muscles. Many enzymes require magnesium to work properly and it is necessary for the burning of fat, carbohydrates and proteins from food for energy.

Low magnesium levels (hypomagnesaemia) can make you feel ill. It also causes numbness and cramps in the hands and feet, irregular heartbeats and fatigue (lack of energy) and vomiting.

Why have I been asked to take magnesium?

You need to take magnesium supplements because your body levels are low. Low levels can be caused by a diet deficient in leafy green vegetables. It can also happen if your intestine is not absorbing enough magnesium from your diet or you are taking other medicines or have illnesses that cause you to lose Magnesium from your body.

Taking magnesium supplements

Magnesium supplements are usually taken as capsules, chewable tablets or as powders to be mixed with water and taken orally. Blood tests will be required to keep a check on your body's magnesium levels and adjust the dose of your supplement.

The hospital pharmacy will supply you with enough magnesium for two weeks treatment at home. Before you run out make an appointment with your GP for further supplies. If your GP prefers the hospital to continue your treatment then please contact your consultant's secretary to make alternative arrangements.

Types of magnesium supplements:

Name	Preparation	Amount (millimoles)	Directions for use	Flavour
<i>Magnesium Aspartate</i>	Oral powder	10mmol	Dissolve in 50-200ml water	Peach/apricot
<i>Magnesium Glycerophosphate</i>	Liquid	1mmol/ml	Spoon or oral syringe	No flavour
<i>Magnesium Glycerophosphate</i>	Chewable tablet	4mmol	Suck or chew	Peppermint
<i>Magnesium Oxide</i>	Capsule	4mmol	Swallow whole, do not chew	No flavour

Side effects

All medicines have side effects, but they don't occur in all the people who take them. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following main side effects continue or if they become troublesome.

- Irritation of the stomach lining
- Diarrhoea

If you experience any other side effects that you are concerned about while taking the supplement, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

Storing your medicine

- Keep it in the container it was dispensed in
- Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children
- Store at room temperature, away from direct heat and light
- Do not share your medicine with anyone else

Additional information

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you require more information or have any questions please contact the hospital medicine information department on the number below.

Medicines advice for patients

If you have any questions about the medicines which have been prescribed from the Trust, call Medicines Information on 020 8869 2762 from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email us at www.nwlh.nhs.uk (Patients and Visitors / Medicines Advice for Patients).

This leaflet has been produced by staff in the Pharmacy department of The North West London Hospitals NHS Trust. Please contact us for more information on 0208 235 4100 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Pharmacy Department, St. Marks Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow, HA1 3UJ

How to obtain further supplies

Once your GP has prescribed it for you, your community pharmacist (chemist) will probably have to order it in especially for you. Please give your chemist a few days notice before you run out. There are a number of companies that your pharmacist can obtain supplies from, but if you have problems obtaining a prescription for further supplies, please contact the hospital pharmacy on 020 869 4100 for advice.

General Trust Information

The North West London Hospitals' Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a confidential service for people who would like information, help, or advice about the services provided by any of our hospitals. Please call 0800 783 4372 between 10am and 4pm or email Nwlh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

For a translation of this leaflet or for an English version in large print, audio or Braille please ask a member of staff or call 0800 783 4372.

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