

## LEVODOPA AND CARBIDOPA

*lee-voe-doe-pa and kar-bi-doe-pa*

### What does it do?

*Levodopa* and *carbidopa* is used to treat Parkinson's disease, and sometimes other conditions. *Levodopa* changes into dopamine in your body. *Carbidopa* helps get more *levodopa* into your brain.

### Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart, lung, or mental health problems, if you have ever had a stomach ulcer, or if you have glaucoma.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

### How should you take it?

Take *levodopa* and *carbidopa* regularly as directed with a glass of water.

Swallow the controlled release (CR) tablets whole.

### What if you forget a dose?

If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at the same time.

### Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *levodopa* and *carbidopa* including:

- iron supplements (e.g. Ferro-Tab®)

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products (e.g. kava) or recreational drugs.

### What side effects might you notice?

| Side Effects   | Recommended action   |
|--|--|
| Fast or irregular heartbeat, chest pain  | Tell your doctor immediately                                     |
| Strange or uncontrolled movements, loss of co-ordination<br>Hallucinations, confusion, anxiety, mood changes<br>Unusual urges (e.g. gambling, eating, spending, sex)<br>Falling asleep without warning | Tell your doctor   |
| Drowsiness   | Tell your doctor if troublesome                                  |
| Lightheaded or dizzy after standing up   | Stand up slowly. If it continues, or is severe, tell your doctor |
| Change in colour of urine, sweat or saliva (red/brown)   | This is harmless   |
| Nausea, vomiting   | Take with a snack such as a cracker or biscuit                   |

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

### Other information:

- *Levodopa* and *carbidopa* can impair your ability to do tasks such as driving or using machines. Alcohol makes this worse. Discuss your risk with your health professional. (search NZTA - Are you safe to drive?)
- Eating a lot of protein may affect how well *levodopa* and *carbidopa* works for you. Talk to your health professional about the best way for you to take *levodopa* and *carbidopa* in relation to food.
- Do not stop taking *levodopa* and *carbidopa* suddenly without talking to your doctor first. Your doctor may reduce the dose gradually.