Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

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. Dopamine helps your brain control your body movements. Carbidopa helps get more *levodopa* into your brain.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart or mental health problems, or if you have angle-closure 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. You can take it with or without food.
Slow-release tablet: Swallow whole - do not crush or chew.

Do not stop taking *levodopa* and *carbidopa* suddenly without talking to your doctor first.

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
Symptoms of a fast or irregular heartbeat including: fluttering, pounding or pain in your chest, dizziness or fainting	Tell your doctor immediately
Squirming or wriggling movement (such as head wobble) Seeing, hearing or feeling things that aren't really there, mood changes Unusual urges (e.g. gambling, eating, spending, sex) Suddenly falling asleep Persistent diarrhoea, abdominal pain	Tell your doctor
Drowsiness Diarrhoea	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 urine colour (red/brown)	This is harmless
Nausea, vomiting	Can happen when you first start but should improve. Try taking with a snack such as a cracker or a biscuit. Tell your doctor if doesn't improve.

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. See 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.