

## Domperidone: small risk of heart problems

May 2014

### Key messages

- Domperidone is a medicine that you should now only take to stop or prevent you feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting).
- Domperidone may cause heart problems in some people. Do not take domperidone if you have or have had heart problems, are taking other medicines known to affect the heart, or have liver failure (see below for details)
- If you buy domperidone over the counter:
  - tell the pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines
  - take the lowest dose that works for you (up to a maximum of 3 10 milligram tablets per day) for short periods of time (no more than 48 hours)
  - talk to your doctor if you do not get better within 48 hours.
- Talk to a doctor straight away if you experience dizziness; fainting; rapid, fluttering, or pounding heartbeat; or chest pain while taking domperidone.



### What is domperidone and what does it do?

Domperidone is a medicine that you should now only take to stop or prevent you feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting). The brand name of domperidone is Motilium. Unbranded versions of domperidone are also available.

### What is the new safety information for domperidone?

As with any medicine, domperidone may cause side effects in some people. It is already known that domperidone can cause irregular heartbeats (heart arrhythmia). A recent review of the safety and effectiveness of domperidone found that it may slightly increase the risk of an irregular heartbeat and death due to heart problems. These are serious side effects but the chance that they may happen is very low.

This risk may be slightly higher in some people, especially those who are older than 60 years and those who take more than 30 milligrams of domperidone a day.

### What should I do if I need to take domperidone?

The new advice is that you should now only take domperidone for treating or preventing nausea and vomiting.

You should not take domperidone if any of the following apply to you:

- your ECG (electrocardiogram) shows a heart problem called “prolonged QT corrected interval”
- you have or have had a problem where your heart cannot pump blood round your body as well as it should (a condition called heart failure)

- you have high or low levels of potassium, or low levels of magnesium in your blood
- you are taking other medicines that affect your heart
- you have moderate to severe liver failure.

If you are currently taking domperidone, there is no need to stop taking it immediately. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist at your next routine visit if you have any heart problems or other concerns about the treatment. Talk to your doctor straight away if you have any of the following symptoms while taking domperidone:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- rapid, fluttering, or pounding heartbeat
- dizziness
- extreme tiredness
- fainting

You may be prescribed domperidone by your doctor or nurse. You can also buy it in pharmacies without a prescription (“over the counter”). Domperidone bought over the counter should not be taken by children under 16 years old.

The advice in this article also applies to children prescribed domperidone by their doctor or nurse.

### **Reporting side effects**

Please report any suspected side effects to any medicine or vaccine to the Yellow Card Scheme via the website ([www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)) or by calling the free phone line (0800 731 6789). By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.