

# Topiramate



## What is it used for?

Topiramate has many uses in medicine. Although it is not currently approved by the FDA for weight management, it is used commonly in weight management clinics for this purpose.

Topiramate may help you:

- feel less interest in eating in between meals
- think less about food and eating
- find it easier to push the plate away
- find giving up sugar containing beverages easier
- have an easier time eating less

## How does it work?

Topiramate is a medication that was originally developed to treat seizures and migraine headaches in children and adults. It affects chemical messengers in the brain but the exact way topiramate works to decrease weight is unknown.

For some of our patients, the pills work right away. They feel and think quite differently about food. Other patients do not feel much of a change but find, in fact, they have lost weight! Like all weight loss medications, topiramate works best when you help it work. This means:

- have less tempting high calorie (fattening) food around the house
- have lower calorie food (fruits, vegetables, low fat meats and dairy) for snacks
- eat out (fast food or at a restaurant) only one time or less each week
- eat your meals at a table with the TV or computer off

## How should I take this medication?

- Start with one 25 mg tablet one time a day for a week
- Increase to two 25 mg tablets (50 mg total) one time a day for the next week
- On week 3 take 3 of the 25 mg tablets (75 mg total) one time a day and continue at this dose until you are seen again
- You should not abruptly discontinue this medication without speaking with your doctor. Contact your doctor for instructions on how to stop your medication slowly and safely if you would like to stop your medication.
- Topiramate should not be thrown away at home, if you stop the medication you can dispose of it either at a medication drop-off location or disposal mail-in program.

## Is topiramate safe?

Most people tolerate topiramate without any problems. Tell your doctor if you have a history of kidney stones, if you are taking phenytoin or birth control pills, or if you are pregnant. Topiramate may be harmful if used during pregnancy. Topiramate may cause you to sweat less and decrease your ability to tolerate hot weather. Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and kidney stones.

## Endocrinology

## What are the side effects?

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you notice any of these side effects:

- Signs of an allergic reaction like rash, hives, trouble breathing, or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Change in mood, especially thoughts of suicide
- Rash or pain in your flanks (side and back) or groin
- Unexplained bruising or bleeding
- Trouble breathing or swallowing
- High fever
- Yellowing of your eyes, face, or skin
- Sudden vision changes, blurriness, or vision loss

If you notice these less serious side effects, talk with your doctor:

- Mental fogging, trouble concentrating, or memory problems
- Diarrhea, constipation, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up
- Feeling nervous or excitable
- Joint pain
- Headache
- Flushing

Alcohol may interact with this medication. Do not drink alcohol or take medications that include alcohol as one of the active ingredients while taking topiramate.

One of the dangers of topiramate is the possibility of birth defects. If you become pregnant while you are taking topiramate, there is the risk that your baby will be born with a birth defect such as a cleft lip or palate. Topiramate is not safe to take while you are breastfeeding. If you are on topiramate and of childbearing age, you need to be on a reliable form of birth control (examples include intrauterine devices, injections, or condoms) or refrain from sexual intercourse.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Topiramate may decrease the effectiveness of all hormonal birth control pills.