

## Taking colesevelam for bile acid malabsorption

### When you are taking an adequate dose of colesevelam, it should:

- Improve your stool consistency, by firming up the stool
- Reduce the need to rush to have your bowels open
- Reduce the number of times you need to have your bowels open
- Give you better control.

### How much do I need to take?

The dose is individual, but most people will need to take between 2 and 6 tablets daily (1.25-3.75g daily; each tablet: 625mg). Many people find that colesevelam does not cause any major side effects, yet gastrointestinal discomfort, constipation, headache, nausea and vomiting have been reported. We therefore suggest that you start to take the tablets slowly and only reach the full dose (if this is required) after two weeks.

### How should I take colesevelam?

We would like you to start taking the colesevelam tablets as we describe here until you are taking six tablets a day. Some people find that their symptoms have settled on a lower dose than six tablets and can stay on that lower dose long-term.

### Possible side effects

If you develop new abdominal pain, nausea or headaches soon after starting the colesevelam, the drug may be causing these symptoms. Reduce the dose to the level at which you tolerated the medication well and then after a couple of days try and increase the dose again gradually. If the symptoms worsen then please contact us.

### Suggested regime

- Day 1: start taking 2 capsules of colesevelam with your main meal
- Day 7: increase the dose to 4 capsules
- Day 14: increase the dose to 6 capsules

### When to take the capsules during the day?

You can split the final dose of six capsules into two portions and take three capsules with each of two main meals during the day.



### **Important points**

Remember that colesevelam can interact with other medication and can cause malabsorption of the other medication.

**Therefore it is crucial to take colesevelam four hours before or after other medication.**

### **Contact details**

For further advice about taking colesevelam, please contact:

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline  
(Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

via the Hotline below

GIANTS (GI and Nutrition Team Service)

0207 811 8216 or 8106

Alternatively, please call

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline:**

020 8915 6899

(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

