

ZONISAMIDE

Other names

Zonegran

Drug category

Sulfonamide, sodium channel blocker, carbonic anhydrase inhibitor

Uses

Zonisamide is used for focal epilepsy. It has been tried in Parkinson's disease, bipolar disorder and tremor.

Available forms

Capsule

Some potential side-effects (inform your doctor if you think you have a serious side-effect)

Weight loss, poor appetite, nausea, headache, tiredness, rash, irritability

Rare: Kidney stones (maintain high fluid intake)

Not to be used if:

Previous reaction to sulphonamide drugs (e.g. acetazolamide, furosemide)
Severe liver disease

Contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding

Should avoid in pregnancy as likely increased risk of birth defects. Avoid for 4 weeks before stopping contraception and before breastfeeding.

Interactions with other drugs

Avoid acetazolamide, topiramate. Carbamazepine, phenytoin and primidone decrease drug levels. Many other potential drug interactions.

Monitoring

Monitor weight every 2-3 months for loss (can be severe).

How to use it

Day	Morning dose	Evening dose	(Other drugs)
Start date	Nil	25mg	
2 weeks later	25mg	25mg	
4 weeks later	25mg	50mg	
6 weeks later	50mg	50mg	
After 6 weeks	Continue same dose	Continue same dose	

If 50mg twice daily does not help and you have no side-effects, then it can be increased to a higher dose, and this can be done by adding 50mg every 2 weeks but the maximum dose should be no more than 500mg in a day (250mg twice a day). If reducing it, do this in steps of 50mg every week until stopped.

Once on a regular dose, it can be switched to a once a day dose, but this may increase side-effects.

This information is for guidance only. Always read the medicine information leaflet with any new medicine for full details.