



29 April 2009

Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) Fact Sheet

- Tamiflu is an antiviral medicine. It is NOT a vaccine.¹
- It belongs to a group of medicines called neuraminidase inhibitors. These medicines attack the influenza virus and stop it spreading further inside your body.¹
- Tamiflu is active against influenza virus types A and B and can be used in people over one year of age.¹
- Tamiflu needs to be taken as soon as possible within the first or second day of onset of symptoms.¹
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has indicated that the Mexican Swine Influenza virus is sensitive to Tamiflu²
- Taking Tamiflu can prevent you catching influenza or if you have already caught influenza it can make the symptoms less severe and help you recover faster.¹
- **Tamiflu delivers:***
 - 38 percent reduction in the severity of symptoms⁴
 - 67 percent reduction in respiratory complications requiring antibiotics, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, in otherwise healthy individuals⁵
 - 37 percent reduction in the duration of influenza illness³

*compared to placebo.
- Tamiflu is taken orally, either as a capsule or a liquid formulation.¹
- The adult treatment dose for seasonal influenza is one capsule (75 mg) twice daily for 5 days. For prevention of influenza following close contact with an infected individual the adult dose is one capsule (75 mg) daily for at least 10 days or in community outbreak once daily for up to 6 weeks.¹
- Tamiflu is well tolerated with the most common side effects being nausea and vomiting³
- Between 1st May and 30th September each year, Tamiflu may be supplied by a pharmacist without a doctor's prescription for the TREATMENT of influenza in patients 12 years and older presenting in person to a pharmacist with early influenza symptoms (within 48 hours). Note that a pharmacist is not permitted to supply Tamiflu for prevention of influenza without a prescription and people must see their doctor in this instance.⁷
- A prescription from a doctor is required when Tamiflu is used:
 - For treatment of children <12 years of age^{1,7}
 - For prevention of influenza^{1,7}
 - For the treatment of influenza in patients 12 years and older between 1st October and 30th April^{1,7}

Differences between symptoms of influenza and the common cold⁶

| Signs & Symptoms | Influenza | Cold |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Fever/chills | Usually present, high | Uncommon |
| Chest discomfort/cough | Common | Mild to moderate, hacking cough |
| Headache | Very common | Uncommon |
| Aches and pains | Common and often severe | Mild |
| Fatigue and weakness | Can last up to two-three weeks | Mild |
| Extreme exhaustion | Very common initially | Never |
| Stuffy nose/sneezing/ sore throat | Sometimes | Common |

Adapted from MedBroadcast, Influenza. Available from www.medbroadcast.com

- Tamiflu is a prescription medicine. If you have any further questions on any of the information above, talk to your doctor or consult the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) at www.medsafe.govt.nz

References

1. Tamiflu[®] (oseltamivir) Data Sheet. Roche Products (New Zealand) Limited. 3 March 2009.
2. WHO. Influenza-like illness outbreak in the US and Mexico. Transcript of Global Telephone News Conference with Dr Margaret Chan, Director General, World Health Organization, 25 April 2009. Available from http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/swineflu_presstranscript_2009_04_25.pdf Accessed April 2009
3. Nicholson KG et al. Efficacy and safety of oseltamivir in treatment of acute influenza: a randomised controlled trial. *Lancet* 2000;355:1845-1850.
4. Treanor JJ et al. Efficacy and safety of the oral neuraminidase inhibitor oseltamivir in treating acute influenza: a randomized controlled trial. *JAMA* 2000;283:1016-24.
5. Kaiser L et al. Impact of oseltamivir treatment on influenza-related lower respiratory tract complications and hospitalizations. *Arch Intern Med* 2003;163:1667-1672.
6. The difference between influenza and the common cold. MedBroadcast. Available from http://www.medbroadcast.com/channel_health_features_details.asp?health_feature_id=69&article_id=147&channel_id=2014&relation_id=13311 Accessed April 2009.
7. Medsafe. Extract from *New Zealand Gazette*, 5/10/2006, No. 114, p3375.

Consumer information - what you should know about Tamiflu®

Tamiflu® (oseltamivir 75mg capsules and 12mg/ml oral suspension) is a **Prescription Medicine** for the treatment and prevention of influenza (flu) in adults and children 1 year of age and older. Between May and September Tamiflu can be counter prescribed and sold by a pharmacist for the treatment of influenza in patients 12 years and older who present in person with influenza symptoms. Treatment should begin within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have kidney disease or hereditary fructose intolerance.

Possible side effects: **Common:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach pain, and headache. In children, in addition to above, ear problems or infection, nose bleeds, discharge from eyes and breathlessness or wheezing. **Rare:** Sudden signs of allergy such as rash, swelling of face, lips or tongue. Chest infection with fever, chills and shortness of breath. Yellowing of the skin, dark coloured urine or severe stomach pain. Diarrhoea with blood. Patients or their caregivers should look out for signs of abnormal behaviour (convulsions, delirium, severe confusion).

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if Tamiflu is right for you. Use strictly as directed. If symptoms continue or you have side effects or would like further information, please contact your health professional or visit www.medsafe.govt.nz for Consumer Medicine Information. **Tamiflu is an unfunded medicine. You will need to pay for this medicine. A consultation fee may apply.**



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