

# Oralvac® Compact - sublingual immunotherapy treatment

This leaflet aims to answer some additional questions you may have about Oralvac® Compact. It should be read in conjunction with the manufacturer's leaflet which will be provided with your medication.

If you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is Oralvac® Compact and what is it used for?

Oralvac® Compact is an unlicensed immunotherapy treatment in the form of sublingual (under the tongue) drops used to reduce allergic reactions to grass pollen, tree pollen and house dust mite. You may have been recommended this treatment:

- If you have a severe allergy to house dust mite, tree and/or grass pollen.
- If your current medication does not control your symptoms very well.

A substance called an allergen causes allergic reactions. Almost anything can be an allergen, including pollen, animals, food and medicine. These can cause allergy symptoms such as rhinitis (inflammation of the inside of the nose) and conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye).

When you take Oralvac® Compact sublingual drops you take a small dose of the allergen (tree pollen, grass pollen or house dust mite). By taking many small doses you are able to build up a tolerance to the allergen you are affected by. This reduces the symptoms of your allergic reaction.

## Taking an unlicensed medicine

In the UK, all manufacturers have to include an information leaflet about their licensed medicine. If the medicine you are taking is not licensed for your particular condition, the information leaflet may not include details of how the medicine may affect you.

If you would like more information about unlicensed medicines please ask for a copy of our leaflet, **Unlicensed medicines – a guide for patients**. Alternatively, you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline (contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

## How do I take Oralvac® Compact?

Oralvac® Compact is to be taken **once** a day by pumping drops under your tongue. It should be taken after a meal. The solution should be kept under your tongue for one to two minutes and subsequently swallowed.

Your treatment schedule will include two stages: the first stage involves taking the maximum number of drops for one week. This is followed by the maintenance phase in which the number of drops are reduced down and taken daily for the rest of the treatment course. The full schedule and duration will be explained to you when you are seen in clinic.

## What should I do if I forget to take Oralvac® Compact?

If you forget to take Oralvac® Compact for one day, you should take your usual dose as soon as you remember. If the treatment was interrupted for more than one day or has been missed repeatedly, then you should inform your clinic as soon as you can. Your dosing schedule may need to be re-adjusted based how many doses were missed and what stage of treatment you are at.

## How many appointments will I need?

An allergy specialist is the only person who can start your Oralvac® Compact treatment. He or she will give you your first dose and then monitor any side effects before deciding whether it is appropriate for you to continue with the treatment.

### Tree Pollen Only

Treatment needs to be started before the tree pollen season begins. You will receive an invite in July to start tree pollen Oralvac® Compact treatment in October. You will have two appointments spaced one week apart. This is so we can complete the initial stage of your treatment. Each appointment will last approximately one hour in total.

### Tree Pollen AND Grass Pollen

Treatment needs to be started before the tree pollen season begins. You will receive an invite in July to start tree/grass pollen Oralvac® Compact treatment in October. You will have four appointments over a seven week period. This is so we can complete the initial stage for each allergen with a three week gap in between.

### House Dust Mite

You will receive an invite in January to start house dust mite Oralvac® Compact treatment in April. Once invited to start treatment, we ask you to confirm your intention to attend as soon as possible as we only order the medication once we have received this confirmation. Once the medication is ordered, it can take up to eight weeks to arrive from the supplier.

Once the medication arrives we will get in contact with you to start your treatment. You will have two appointments spaced one week apart. This is so we can complete the initial stage of your treatment. Each appointment will last approximately one hour in total.

## What happens next?

Once you have attended your initial appointments, the allergy specialist will then give you a review date six months after starting your medication. At this appointment the specialist will use a questionnaire about your quality of life to assess the progress of your treatment and let you know if the treatment needs to continue.

If the medication is improving your symptoms you will continue taking it for three years. You will need to return every six months so the specialist can continue to monitor your response to treatment and to give you a further supply. If your symptoms do not improve, your specialist may stop the treatment.

## Does Oralvac® Compact have any side-effects?

Since you will be taking a tree pollen/grass pollen or house dust mite allergen you will experience a form of your normal allergy symptoms. For example, you may get a runny nose or watery eyes. However, these symptoms usually start immediately after you start the tablets and gradually get less the longer you take the tablets.

Please refer to the manufacturer's leaflet for more information on side-effects. Please note - as stated in the manufacturer's leaflet - that you should contact your GP immediately if you experience severe reactions.

## Can I take other medicines while I am taking Oralvac® Compact?

Yes, you can take most other medicines including your usual treatment for hay fever and asthma. Please let us know about any medicines you currently take, including those prescribed for you and any you buy over the counter, including vitamins, supplements and herbal/alternative medicines. We will check them to make sure that they are suitable to be taken with Oralvac® Compact.

You should discuss any new medicines with your doctor before starting them and you should always tell any other doctor treating you that you are on Oralvac® Compact.

## Can I have vaccinations and other medical procedures?

If you are having any vaccinations, such as for the flu, you should not take your Oralvac® Compact on the day of your vaccination(s). You should wait until any vaccine reactions (if any) have resolved completely before restarting. You should inform your physician that you are taking Oralvac® Compact therapy before you have **any** medical or dental procedures.

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding advice

It is not known how Oralvac® Compact affects an unborn baby due to limited data on its use during pregnancy. It is therefore **not** recommended for women to take this medication during pregnancy.

You should contact your physician if you become pregnant or think that you have become pregnant during treatment. Your physician will need to assess your general condition and whether the treatment had been previously well tolerated before recommending if you can continue your treatment or not.

There is no information available on whether Oralvac® Compact is found in breast milk or not. It is therefore not recommended to commence treatment whilst breastfeeding. Please speak to your physician for further advice.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about drug allergy challenge testing, please contact the **Allergy Nurse Specialist** by calling **020 7188 5830** between 9am and 5pm Monday - Friday for advice. Please call at least five working days before your appointment. The messages are checked regularly and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Please leave your name and telephone contact number.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

## NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 4406/VER1**

Date published: May 2017

Review date: May 2020

© 2017 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust