Pramipexole for the treatment of REM behaviour disorder (RBD)

This leaflet provides you with some information about pramipexole, which has been prescribed to treat your sleep disorder. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is RBD?
RBD happens during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. This is usually the phase of sleep when we dream, and our muscles are temporarily paralysed so we cannot move.

People who have RBD are able to move their muscles while they dream, which means they can act out the content of their dreams.

This can lead to episodes of intense shouting or speaking, and violent movement or behaviour which can result in injury to you or your bed partner.

What is pramipexole?
Pramipexole belongs to a group of medicines which trigger nerve impulses in the brain that help to control body movements. It may help to improve the symptoms of RBD. It works by reducing muscle activity during sleep.

Taking an unlicensed medicine
The use of pramipexole for the treatment of RBD is unlicensed, which means that the manufacturer of the medicine has not specified it can be used in this way. However, there is evidence that it works to treat this particular condition. The leaflet, Unlicensed medicines – a guide for patients, has more information about unlicensed medicines. If you would like a copy, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Alternatively you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

How do I take the medicine?
For the treatment of RBD, pramipexole is taken once a day at night, two to three hours before you go to bed. It should be taken by mouth (orally) with or without food. Swallow the tablets whole with a glass of water.

Keep taking the medicine until your doctor tells you otherwise. Stopping suddenly can cause problems and your doctor will want you to reduce your dose gradually if you need to stop treatment.
What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?
If you forget to take the dose before you fall asleep, don’t worry. Take the next dose when it is due. Do not take an extra dose the following evening to make up for a missed dose.

Are there any side effects?
In addition to their desired effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side effects, but not everyone gets them. The following are examples of some of the side effects reported by patients taking pramipexole. The unwanted effects often fade as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your GP or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side effect</th>
<th>What should I do if it happens?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common (between one in 100 and one in 10)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting (being sick)</td>
<td>Stick to simple foods. Avoid rich or spicy foods. This may decrease with time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling dizzy, faint or sleepy</td>
<td>Lie down if dizzy or faint, then sit for a few moments before standing. Do not drive, use tools or machinery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Try to eat a well-balanced diet and drink several glasses of water per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Take your usual painkiller (for example, paracetamol).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncommon (between one in 1,000 and one in 100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty sleeping, unusual dreams, involuntary movements, eyesight problems, lack of appetite, swollen hands or feet, feeling confused, seeing things that are not actually there (hallucinating).</td>
<td>Speak to your GP about these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important:** if you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your GP for advice as soon as possible:
- Impulsive types of behaviour (for example, an increased desire to gamble, shop, or binge eat, or an increased sex drive).

If any of the side effects continue or become a problem, please contact your GP/consultant or pharmacist for advice.

Is there anything else I need to know?
Do not take alcohol with pramipexole as alcohol can make the drowsiness worse. Alcohol can also make the symptoms of RBD worse.

If you are a driver, please be aware that pramipexole may affect your reactions and ability to drive. It is an offence to drive while your reactions are impaired. Even if your driving ability is not impaired, if you drive, you are advised to carry some evidence with you which shows that the medicine has been prescribed for you – a repeat prescription form or the patient information leaflet from the packet is generally considered suitable.
Pramipexole should be kept out of reach of children. If anyone other than you takes this medicine, you, they, or their parent/carer should contact NHS 111 for advice. If they are unwell, they should call for an ambulance.

The expiry date is printed on the container. Do not use the medicine after this date. The remainder should be returned to your local pharmacy to be discarded.

Sometimes people taking medicines like pramipexole can **fall asleep suddenly during the day** with little or no warning of being tired beforehand. Until you know how you react, take extra care if you drive or operate machinery. If you do find yourself falling asleep suddenly, you should see your doctor as soon as possible for advice, and avoid driving or using tools and machines in the meantime.

**Pregnancy and breastfeeding:**
We do not recommend the use of this medicine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. You should let your consultant know if you are planning a pregnancy so that a management plan can be agreed. If you discover that you are pregnant, please contact your consultant for advice as soon as possible.

**Sleep hygiene:** Taking pramipexole is not a replacement for a good sleep routine. It is still important to aim to get around seven to eight hours of sleep at night if possible. It is advisable to go to bed when tired, and get up at about the same time each day. Maintain a normal total sleep time. Sleep deprivation will increase RBD. Monitor for any sleepiness.

**Bedroom safety precautions for RBD**
- Move objects away from your bedside. This includes night stands, lamps, or other objects that could cause injury.
- Move your bed away from the window.
- Encourage your bed partner to report any worsening or changes in your night-time behaviour.

**Can I take pramipexole with other medicines?**
Pramipexole may interact with some medicines. It is important to let us know about any medicines that you are currently taking, so that we can check pramipexole is suitable for you. If you are buying any medicines over the counter from a pharmacy, always mention that you have been prescribed pramipexole. It is safe to take ibuprofen or paracetamol with this medicine. Seek advice from a pharmacist when buying herbal or homeopathic remedies.

**How will my treatment be reviewed?**
Your treatment will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the dose adjusted depending on your symptoms.

**How do I get a repeat prescription?**
Your GP will give you a repeat prescription for pramipexole which you can take to your local pharmacy for supply. Should your GP not prescribe melatonin for you, please contact the Sleep Disorder Centre for advice. Please make sure you request your repeat prescription early to prevent you running out, or missing, any doses of your medication.
Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about your sleep disorder please contact the Sleep Disorder Centre, t: 020 7188 3430, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Out of hours, please leave a message and a member of staff will call you back in working hours, or contact your GP or NHS 111.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit 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
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)  e: 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

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 website
Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.
w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member: t: 0800 731 0319  e: members@gstt.nhs.uk  w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 4632/VER1
Date published: September 2018
Review date: September 2021
© 2018 Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust
A list of sources is available on request