ABOUT YOUR MEDICINE

Oxcarbazepine

Trileptal, Oxtellar XR, a seizure medicine that is also used to steady mood

Oxcarbazepine prevents seizures, eases sharp facial nerve pain, and is sometimes used to help steady mood.

WHAT IT TREATS	HOW YOU TAKE IT	WHEN IT WORKS	HABIT FORMING
Seizures, nerve pain	Twice daily, food optional	Days to a few weeks	No

This medicine carries **no special FDA safety warning** of that kind.

WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Oxcarbazepine** calms nerve cells that fire too easily. That stops seizures and quiets sudden, stabbing facial pain.
- It is a close relative of carbamazepine, but it needs fewer blood tests and clashes with fewer other medicines.
- Some prescribers use it to steady mood in bipolar disorder. The evidence there is thin, so it is not a first choice.
- It is not a painkiller for ordinary aches and it will not stop a headache. It works by preventing trouble, not treating it.

HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take it twice a day at about the same hours. Food is optional, but a meal helps if it makes your stomach uneasy.
- Swallow the extended-release tablets whole, and take those on an empty stomach unless your prescriber says otherwise.
- Shake the liquid well before every dose and measure it with the syringe from the pharmacy, never with a spoon.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless the next one is soon. Do not double up to make it even.
- Store it at room temperature, and use the liquid within the number of weeks printed on the bottle after opening.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- The dose usually goes up in weekly steps, so the first month feels like a build-up rather than a finished plan.
- Facial nerve pain can respond within days. Seizure control and mood steadiness are judged over several weeks.
- Dizziness and double vision are worst right after each increase and usually settle within several days.
- Expect a blood test for your salt level early on, at about **2 to 4 weeks**, and after any dose increase.
- You do not need routine drug level checks. Your prescriber goes by how you feel and how you are doing.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Dizziness and unsteady walking are the most common. Take the bigger part of the day's amount at night if allowed.
- Double or blurry vision comes and goes with dose increases. Do not drive while it is happening, and tell your prescriber.
- Sleepiness and headache in the first weeks. Regular sleep, water, and a slower dose increase usually help a lot.
- Nausea or stomach upset. Taking it with a meal fixes it for most people without any other change.
- Low sodium is common enough to matter. Headache, tiredness, nausea, or confusion are the signs to report promptly.
- A mild rash can appear. Any rash on this medicine gets checked, so call rather than waiting to see what it does.

CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Stop and call the same day for any new rash. A rash with fever, blisters, or mouth sores means the **ER**.
- Call right away for headache with confusion, worse tiredness, or new seizures, which can mean low sodium.
- Go to the **ER** for face or throat swelling, or for trouble breathing after a dose.
- If thoughts of suicide appear, call or text **988** and tell your prescriber the same day.

WHAT TO AVOID

- This medicine can weaken the pill, the patch, and the ring. Add a second method and talk it over with your prescriber.
- Alcohol stacks with the dizziness and sleepiness, and it makes seizures harder to keep under control.
- Do not drive or use machines while your dose is going up or while your vision is doubling.
- Water pills and some antidepressants push your sodium lower. Tell your prescriber before starting either one.
- If you had a serious rash from carbamazepine, say so, since about **1 in 4** people react to this one too.

STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not stop suddenly. An abrupt stop can cause seizures even if you take this medicine only for pain or mood.
- Your prescriber will taper it over **1 to 2 weeks** or longer, depending on why you were taking it.
- If you stopped because of a rash, tell any future prescriber, since related medicines may not be safe for you.
- Call before you quit over side effects. Slower increases and different timing solve most of them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How often will you check my sodium level once I am settled?
- Does this medicine change how well my birth control works?
- What exactly should I do on the first day I notice a rash?
- How long should we give this before deciding it works for me?

Where this information comes from

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NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.