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Cabergoline tablets (Dostinex, Cabaser)

Cabergoline should be taken with food.

It can cause dizziness, especially during the first few days of treatment.

Each time you collect a fresh supply, check to see if the tablets look the same as you have had before. If they are different, discuss this with your pharmacist who will advise you.

About cabergoline

Type of medicine	A dopaminergic medicine
Used for	Disorders due to high prolactin levels; Parkinson's disease
Also called	Dostinex® (for high prolactin levels) Cabaser® (for Parkinson's disease)
Available as	Tablets

Cabergoline is prescribed for a number of different medical conditions. Your doctor will tell you why it has been prescribed for you.

- Cabergoline prevents the production of a chemical called prolactin. Prolactin is involved in a number of processes within the body, including milk production after childbirth. Cabergoline is therefore helpful in preventing or reducing milk production when this is needed for medical reasons.

- High levels of prolactin occur in people with [prolactinomas](#). A prolactinoma is a non-cancerous swelling in the pituitary gland. This can cause various symptoms including reduced fertility, breast changes, and headaches. Prolactinomas can be treated successfully with medicines which reduce the production of prolactin, such as cabergoline. In these cases, treatment is usually long-term.
- Cabergoline can be prescribed to treat [Parkinson's disease](#), although other treatments are usually preferred. In Parkinson's disease, a number of cells in a small part of the brain become damaged and die. These brain cells normally pass messages down nerves in the spinal cord by producing a chemical called dopamine, and it is these messages which control the muscles of the body. As the cells are damaged, the amount of dopamine that is produced is reduced. A combination of the reduction of cells and a low level of dopamine in the cells in this part of the brain, causes nerve messages to the muscles to become slowed and abnormal. This produces the main symptoms of Parkinson's disease, which are stiffness, shaking (tremor), and slowness of movement. Cabergoline encourages the release of dopamine which helps to ease these symptoms.

Before taking cabergoline

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking cabergoline it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you have been told you have scar tissue affecting your heart, lungs or abdomen.
- If you have a heart condition or blood vessel disease.
- If you have ever had a stomach ulcer.
- If you have a problem with the way your liver works.
- If you have a circulation problem called Raynaud's syndrome.
- If you have ever had a serious mental health problem, such as a psychotic disorder.

- If you have a rare inherited blood disorder called porphyria.
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take cabergoline

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about cabergoline and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- The dose you will need to take will depend upon the reason you are taking cabergoline. You may be asked to take cabergoline just for a few days if it is to stop breast milk; or each day if you have Parkinson's disease; or, if you are taking cabergoline to reduce high prolactin levels, you may only need one dose a week. Your doctor will tell you how much to take and how often to take it, and this information will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you.
- Read the directions from your doctor carefully and take cabergoline exactly as you are told to. If you are taking cabergoline for the first time, your doctor may give you a small dose and then gradually increase your dose. Slowly increasing your dose like this will help to reduce side-effects, such as dizziness, which can occur during the first few days of treatment.
- Swallow the tablet with a drink of water, at a mealtime. Taking cabergoline with a meal will help to reduce the risk of feeling sick (nausea).
- Try to take cabergoline at the same time(s) of day each day; if you are taking it weekly, take it on the same day of the week each week.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If when you remember, it is nearly time for your next dose then take your next dose when it is due but leave out the missed dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor so your progress can be checked. Cabergoline can cause heart and lung problems, particularly in people who need to take it over a long period of time. In order for your doctor to check for this, you may need to have an ECG, lung function tests, blood tests and an X-ray from time to time if you are taking cabergoline long-term.
- There are two different brands and several different strengths of cabergoline tablets. Each time you collect a fresh supply of tablets, it's a good idea to check the packet to make sure they are what you are expecting. If you have any questions about your tablets, ask your pharmacist for advice.
- If you are a woman, you may want to discuss what forms of contraception are suitable for you. Hormonal forms of contraception (such as 'the pill') may not be suitable while you are taking cabergoline. You should avoid becoming pregnant during treatment with cabergoline and for one month after stopping.
- Sometimes people taking cabergoline can fall asleep suddenly with little or no warning of being tired beforehand. Until you know how you react, take extra care if you drive and if you operate machinery. If you do find yourself falling asleep suddenly, you should see your doctor as soon as possible for advice. Avoid driving and avoid use of tools and machines in the meantime.
- Treatment with medicines like cabergoline can sometimes cause problems with impulsive types of behaviour. If you notice any changes in your behaviour, such as an increased desire to gamble, binge eat, or spend excessively, or an increased sex drive, you must let your doctor know as soon as possible.

Can cabergoline cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with cabergoline. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common cabergoline side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling tired, sleepy or dizzy	If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you feel better
Headache	If the headache is severe or continues, speak with your doctor straightaway; otherwise, ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting), indigestion	Stick to simple meals - avoid rich or spicy foods. Remember to take the tablets after food
Constipation	Try to eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water each day
Disturbed sleep, swollen hands or feet	If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor
Changes in the way you feel (such as being depressed or confused), thinking things that are not true (hallucinations), uncontrollable muscle movements	You should let your doctor know about these as soon as possible
Changes to some blood test results	Your doctor will check for these

Important: cabergoline can cause some more serious side-effects. It is important that you contact your doctor for advice **straightaway** if you develop any of the following:

- Any breathlessness or difficulties breathing, or a cough that won't go away.
- Chest or tummy (abdominal) pain or discomfort.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to cabergoline, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store cabergoline

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Keep the tablets in their original container - it contains a silica gel desiccant to protect the tablets from the moisture in the air. Do not swallow the desiccant.
- Store the container in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

If you are due to have an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

If you take any medicines that you have bought without a prescription, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable for you to take with your prescribed medicines.

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, e-cigarettes, medical device incidents, defective or falsified (fake) products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to ensure safe and effective use.

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Cabaser® 1 mg and 2 mg Tablets](#); Pfizer Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated March 2018.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Dostinex® Tablets](#), Pfizer Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated October 2020.

- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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