

# Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) – Information for medical practitioners

Oseltamivir is an antiviral therapy that can reduce lower respiratory tract complications and hospital admissions, as well as duration of symptoms, in people infected with influenza.

## Who is Oseltamivir used for?

Oseltamivir is **recommended** for people with **moderate to severe** influenza, such as people who need hospital or who are rapidly deteriorating.

**Consider** Oseltamivir to treat people who have mild influenza but who are:

- at high risk of severe outcomes (below)
- in aged care facilities, hospitals, or other settings that expose *other* people who are at high risk of severe influenza (below); this is called: "treatment as prevention"

People who are at high risk of influenza complications or severe disease, include:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people of any age
- Children with any of the following:
  - Failure to thrive
  - Malnutrition: moderate to severe
  - Aged 5 years or younger
- People age 65 years or older
- People with the following conditions:
  - Chronic liver disease
  - Chronic renal disease
  - Chronic respiratory conditions
  - Diabetes mellitus
  - Down syndrome
  - Haemoglobinopathies
  - Heart disease
  - Immune compromise (including cancers, HIV infection, immunosuppressive drugs)
  - Malnutrition: moderate or severe
  - Obesity (BMI  $\geq$  30)
  - Severe neurological conditions
- Pregnant women (recommended)
- Residents of aged-care facilities or long-term residential facilities
- Homeless people

## When should Oseltamivir be given?

Oseltamivir is most effective if started as soon as possible following the onset of symptoms. In patients with suspected influenza requiring hospital admission, regardless of how long they have had symptoms, oseltamivir should be commenced prior to transfer if possible. Patients with severe disease, or who have high-risk contacts, should start Oseltamivir as soon as possible.

## Who should NOT take this medication?

Oseltamivir should not be used in people who are allergic to this medication, or to any of the medication ingredients. A lower dose may be needed in people with renal disease, see below.

## Treatment dosage of Oseltamivir

For adults and adolescents 13 years and older

The recommended dose for treatment in adults and adolescents aged 13 years and over, with normal renal function, is

- **oseltamivir 75mg capsule taken orally twice daily for 5 days**, taken whole with a glass of water with or without food

For adults with renal impairment

People with renal impairment may need dose adjustment of oseltamivir as shown in the table below, guided by Therapeutic Guidelines (accessed May 2021).

Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)	Dosage (oral) Oseltamivir & Duration
GFR > 30 mL/min	75 mg <b>twice</b> daily for 5 days
GFR 10-30 mL/min	75 mg <b>once</b> daily for 5 days
GFR less than 10 mL/min	No data; if essential: 75 mg 48-hourly for 5 days, OR 30 mg 24-hourly for 5 days
Intermittent haemodialysis	75mg stat at the onset of symptoms regardless of next dialysis session timing, followed by 30mg after each dialysis session. Treatment not to exceed 5 days from the time of the initial dose
Peritoneal dialysis	75 mg at the onset of symptoms, then repeat dose after 5 days, then cease
Continuous renal replacement therapy	Normal: 75 mg twice daily for 5 days

## For children

Oseltamivir treatment is recommended for children with moderate to severe influenza requiring hospitalisation, and those with flu-like symptoms or confirmed influenza with risk factors or high risk contacts. As treatment dosing for children age <12 months is based on limited data, consider discussing with a paediatrician. The dosing below is from Therapeutic Guidelines (accessed May 2021).

Children age under 12 months		
Age	Dosage (oral)	Duration
<12 months	3mg/kg twice daily	5 days
Children age 1 year or older		
Body weight	Dosage (oral)	Duration
<15kg	30mg twice daily	5 days
15-23kg	45mg twice daily	5 days
23-40kg	60mg twice daily	5 days
>40kg	75mg twice daily	5 days

## How to make children's doses from Oseltamivir capsules

A suspension can be made from oseltamivir capsules if oseltamivir suspension formula is not available, or if the child is unable to swallow capsules, or if the child requires a dose different to that available in capsule form. Follow the instructions below:

1. Empty oseltamivir 75 mg capsule in a bowl and add 5 mL water to the powder. Stir for about 2 minutes.
2. Draw up into an oral syringe the correct amount of mixture from the bowl.
  - 30 mg = 2 mL
  - 45 mg = 3 mL
  - 60 mg = 4 mL
3. Mix the dose in soft food to disguise taste

## Pregnancy

Pregnant women are at higher risk for complications from influenza. Left untreated, it is associated with an increased risk of adverse events to the foetus and increased complications to the mother. Pregnant women, particularly in the second or third trimester are therefore likely to benefit from oseltamivir. It is recommended for all pregnant women with influenza

## Side effects of oseltamivir

Common side effects may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or abdominal pain; recommending patients take oseltamivir with food may help to reduce or prevent these side effects. Rarely side effects such as confusion, hallucinations, seizures or abnormal behaviour may occur.

## Prophylaxis

Prophylaxis with Oseltamivir should be started within 48 hours of exposure, and may be considered in special situations such as:

- people at high risk of severe influenza
- outbreaks in boarding schools/special schools or residential settings such as nursing homes or prisons
- health care workers in high risk settings (neonatal intensive care units, working with immunosuppressed patients).

Doses for PROPHYLAXIS are DIFFERENT to treatment doses and are generally half dose for double duration – check Therapeutic Guidelines for each case or discuss with CDC or Infectious Diseases on a case by case basis.

## Vaccination

Recommend annual influenza vaccination at every opportunity.

For more information contact the [Centre for Disease Control](#) in your region

- Alice Springs 8951 7540
- Darwin 8922 8044
- Katherine 8973 9049
- Nhulunbuy 8987 0357
- Tennant Creek 8962 4259