Oseltamivir Phosphate (Tamiflu®) – Why is this medicine prescribed?

Oseltamivir is an anti-viral medication which works by stopping the growth and spread of the influenza A or B virus in your body and helps shorten the time you are ill. Oseltamivir can be used to either:
1. **prevent** influenza in people who have been or may be exposed to the influenza virus, or
2. **treat** people who have already been infected with the influenza virus and are ill.

This drug is not a substitute for vaccination. Vaccination is still recommended as the first line of defence to prevent influenza.

**Effectiveness of Tamiflu®**

- Reduces the amount of virus and significantly reduces the amount of viral shedding from the body.
- Reduces the severity of symptoms and lower respiratory tract infections.
- Protects individuals against influenza illness and is effective in preventing outbreaks.

**How is this medication taken?**

- This medication should be started as soon as prescribed. To be effective for treatment, it must be taken **within 2 days of your symptoms starting**.
- You can take this drug with or without food. Food may help to reduce stomach upset.
- If you have been prescribed this drug **for treatment**, you will take your dose twice a day (morning and evening) for 5 days. Take all of the medication as prescribed until finished, even if you are feeling better.
- During an influenza outbreak in a health care facility, continue taking this medication for prevention **until the outbreak is declared over or as directed by the Medical Health Officer**.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember **unless** it is within 2 hours of your next scheduled dose. **Do not take double doses**.
Side Effects

- The most common side effects to Tamiflu® are vomiting, headache, nausea and abdominal pain. These usually occur within 1 to 2 days of starting the drug.
- Other side effects can occur including allergic reactions.
- Report any allergic, unusual or alarming side effect to your doctor immediately.
- Tamiflu® has been used by about 42 million people worldwide and has been found to have a favourable safety profile and is well tolerated.

Precautions

Before you start taking oseltamivir, let your doctor know if you have had an allergic reaction to oseltamivir, have liver or kidney disease, are pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant*, are breastfeeding, have heart or lung disease or other serious medical conditions or if you are taking any other medication including non-prescription medication. Oseltamivir should not be given to children under 1 year of age.

Contraindications

Consult your physician if you have had hypersensitivity to a previous dose of this drug. Roche Tamiflu® product monograph and information can be found at http://www.rochecanada.com

Storage

Capsules should be stored at room temperature in a dry place. The liquid suspension should be used within 10 days and it should be refrigerated, do not freeze. Keep Tamiflu® and all other medications out of the reach of children.

Recommended Prophylaxis for Health Care Worker’s During an Outbreak

Oseltamivir prophylaxis dosage is 75 mg once daily (if estimated creatinine clearance is greater than 60 mL/min) until the outbreak is declared over or unless otherwise directed by the Medical Health Officer. It is recommended that health care workers receive a prescription for 10 days; however, the pharmacy may dispense the prescription in smaller amounts upon request. If the outbreak continues for more than 10 days the prophylaxis needs to continue.

*Pregnancy category C: Crosses the placenta and secreted into breast milk, but no human safety data is available; use in pregnancy and lactation only if potential benefits outweigh the risk.