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# *Antiviral Medication Information For Health Care Workers*

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## *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.