

## **Package Leaflet: Information for the patient**

**Esciprex 5 mg Film-coated tablets**  
**Esciprex 10 mg Film-coated tablets**  
**Esciprex 15 mg Film-coated tablets**  
**Esciprex 20 mg Film-coated tablets**

escitalopram

**Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine because it contains important information for you.**

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you only. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their signs of illness are the same as yours.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

### **What is in this leaflet**

1. What Esciprex is and what it is used for
2. What you need to know before you take Esciprex
3. How to take Esciprex
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store Esciprex
6. Contents of the pack and other information

#### **1. What Esciprex is and what it is used for**

Esciprex contains the active substance escitalopram. Esciprex belongs to a group of antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). These medicines act on the serotonin system in the brain by increasing the serotonin level. Disturbances in the serotonin system are considered as an important factor in the development of depression and related diseases.

Esciprex is **used to treat depression** (major depressive episodes) **and anxiety disorders** (such as panic disorder with or without agoraphobia, social anxiety disorder, generalised anxiety disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder).

It may take a couple of weeks before you start to feel better. Continue to take Esciprex, even if it takes some time before you feel any improvement in your condition.

You must talk to a doctor if you do not feel better or if you feel worse.

#### **2. What you need to know before you take Esciprex**

##### **Do not take Esciprex**

- if you are allergic to escitalopram or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6)
- if you take other medicines which belong to a group called MAO inhibitors, including selegiline (used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease), moclobemide (used in the treatment of depression) and linezolid (an antibiotic)
- if you are born with or have had an episode of abnormal heart rhythm (seen at ECG; an examination to evaluate how the heart is functioning)
- if you take medicines for heart rhythm problems or that may affect the heart's rhythm (see section 2 "Other medicines and Esciprex").

## Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking Esciprex.

Please tell your doctor if you have any other condition or illness, as your doctor may need to take this into consideration. In particular, tell your doctor if:

- you have **epilepsy**. Treatment with Esciprex should be stopped if seizures occur for the first time or if there is an increase in the frequency of seizures (see also section 4 “Possible side effects”).
- you suffer from **impaired liver or kidney** function. Your doctor may need to adjust your dosage.
- you have **diabetes**. Treatment with Esciprex may alter your blood sugar levels. The dosage of insulin and/or a blood sugar lowering medicine which is taken by mouth may need to be adjusted.
- you have a **decreased level of sodium** in the blood
- you have a tendency to easily develop **bleedings** or bruises, or if you are pregnant (see ‘Pregnancy’)
- you are receiving **electroconvulsive treatment**
- you have **coronary heart disease**
- if you suffer or have suffered from heart problems or have recently had a heart attack
- if you have a low resting heart-rate and/or you know that you may have salt depletion as a result of prolonged severe diarrhoea and vomiting (being sick) or usage of diuretics (water tablets)
- if you experience a fast or irregular heartbeat, fainting, collapse or dizziness on standing up, which may indicate abnormal functioning of the heart rate
- if you have or have previously had eye problems, such as certain kinds of glaucoma (increased pressure in the eye).

## Please note

Some patients with **manic-depressive illness** may enter into a manic phase. This is characterised by unusual and rapidly changing ideas, inappropriate happiness and excessive physical activity. If you experience this, contact your doctor.

Symptoms such as **restlessness or difficulty to sit or stand still** can also occur during the first weeks of the treatment. Tell your doctor immediately if you experience these symptoms.

Medicines like Esciprex (so called SSRIs/SNRIs) may cause symptoms of sexual dysfunction (see section 4). In some cases, these symptoms have continued after stopping treatment.

## Thoughts of suicide and worsening of your depression or anxiety disorder

If you are depressed and/or have anxiety disorders you can sometimes have thoughts of harming or killing yourself. These may be increased when first starting antidepressants, since these medicines all take time to work, usually about two weeks but sometimes longer.

You may be more likely to think like this:

- If you have previously had thoughts about killing or harming yourself
- If you are a young adult. Information from clinical trials has shown an increased risk of suicidal behaviour in adults aged less than 25 years with psychiatric conditions who were treated with an antidepressant.

If you have thoughts of harming or killing yourself at any time, **contact your doctor or go to a hospital straight away**.

**You may find it helpful to tell a relative or close friend** that you are depressed or have an anxiety disorder, and ask them to read this leaflet. You might ask them to tell you if they think your depression or anxiety is getting worse, or if they are worried about changes in your behaviour.

## Children and adolescents

Esciprex should normally not be used for children and adolescents under 18 years. Also, you should know that patients under 18 have an increased risk of side effects such as suicide attempts, suicidal thoughts and hostility (predominantly aggression, oppositional behaviour and anger) when they take

this class of medicines. Despite this, your doctor may prescribe Esciprex for patients under 18 because he/she decides that this is in their best interest. If your doctor has prescribed Esciprex for a patient under 18 and you want to discuss this, please go back to your doctor. You should inform your doctor if any symptoms listed above develop or worsen when patients under 18 are taking Esciprex. Also, the long-term safety effects concerning growth, maturation and cognitive and behavioural development of Esciprex in this age group have not yet been demonstrated.

### Other medicines and Esciprex

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines.

Tell your doctor if you are using any of the following medicines:

- **Non-selective monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)**, containing phenelzine, iproniazid, isocarboxazid, nialamide, and tranylcypromine as active ingredients. If you have used any of these medicines you will need to wait 14 days before you start taking Esciprex. After stopping Esciprex you must wait 7 days before taking any of these medicines.
- **Reversible, selective MAO-A inhibitors**, containing moclobemide (used to treat depression).
- **Irreversible MAO-B inhibitors**, containing selegiline (used to treat Parkinson's disease). These increase the risk of side effects.
- The antibiotic **linezolid**.
- **Lithium** (used in the treatment of manic-depressive disorder) and **tryptophan**.
- **Imipramine and desipramine** (both used to treat depression).
- **Sumatriptan and similar medicines** (used to treat migraine) like **tramadol** (used against severe pain). These increase the risk of side effects.
- Buprenorphine (used against severe pain) as the risk of serotonin syndrome, a potentially life threatening condition, is increased.
- **Cimetidine, lansoprazole and omeprazole** (used to treat stomach ulcers), **fluconazole** (used to treat fungal infections), **fluvoxamine** (antidepressant) and **ticlopidine** (used to reduce the risk of stroke). These may cause increased blood levels of escitalopram.
- **St. John's Wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*) - a herbal remedy used for depression.
- **Acetylsalicylic acid and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** (medicines used for pain relief or to thin the blood, so-called anti-coagulants). These may increase bleeding-tendency.
- **Warfarin, dipyridamole, and phenprocoumon** (medicines used to thin the blood, so called anti-coagulants). Your doctor will probably check the coagulation time of your blood when starting and discontinuing Esciprex in order to verify that your dose of anti-coagulant is still adequate.
- **Mefloquin** (used to treat Malaria), **bupropion** (used to treat depression) and **tramadol** (used to treat severe pain) due to a possible risk of a lowered threshold for seizures.
- **Neuroleptics** (medicines to treat schizophrenia, psychosis) and antidepressants (tricyclic antidepressants and SSRIs) due to a possible risk of a lowered threshold for seizures.
- **Flecainide, propafenone, and metoprolol** (used in cardiovascular diseases), **clomipramine, and nortriptyline** (antidepressants) and **risperidone, thioridazine, and haloperidol** (antipsychotics). The dosage of Esciprex may need to be adjusted.
- Medicines that decrease blood levels of potassium or magnesium as these conditions increase the risk of life threatening heart rhythm disorder.

Do not take Esciprex if you take medicines for heart rhythm problems or medicines that may affect the heart's rhythm, such as Class IA and III antiarrhythmics, antipsychotics (e.g. phenothiazine derivatives, pimozide, haloperidol), tricyclic antidepressants, certain antimicrobial agents (e.g. sparfloxacin, moxifloxacin, erythromycin IV, pentamidine, anti-malarian treatment particularly halofantrine), certain antihistamines (astemizole, hydroxyzine, mizolastine). If you have any further questions about this you should speak to your doctor.

### Esciprex with food, drink and alcohol

Esciprex can be taken with or without food (see section 3 "How to take Esciprex").

As with many medicines, combining Esciprex with alcohol is not advisable, although Esciprex is not expected to interact with alcohol.

**Pregnancy, breast-feeding and fertility**

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking this medicine. Do not take Esciprex if you are pregnant or breast-feeding, unless you and your doctor have discussed the risks and benefits involved.

If you take Esciprex during the last 3 months of your pregnancy you should be aware that the following effects may be seen in your newborn baby: trouble with breathing, bluish skin, fits, body temperature changes, feeding difficulties, vomiting, low blood sugar, stiff or floppy muscles, vivid reflexes, tremor, jitteriness, irritability, lethargy, constant crying, sleepiness and sleeping difficulties. If your newborn baby has any of these symptoms, please contact your doctor immediately.

Make sure your midwife and/or doctor know you are on Esciprex. When taken during pregnancy, particularly in the last 3 months of pregnancy, medicines like Esciprex may increase the risk of a serious condition in babies, called persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN), making the baby breathe faster and appear bluish. These symptoms usually begin during the first 24 hours after the baby is born. If this happens to your baby you should contact your midwife and/or doctor immediately.

If used during pregnancy Esciprex should never be stopped abruptly.

If you take Esciprex near the end of your pregnancy there may be an increased risk of heavy vaginal bleeding shortly after birth, especially if you have a history of bleeding disorders. Your doctor or midwife should be aware that you are taking Esciprex so they can advise you.

It is expected that escitalopram will be excreted into breast milk.

Citalopram, a medicine like escitalopram, has been shown to reduce the quality of sperm in animal studies. Theoretically, this could affect fertility, but impact on human fertility has not been observed as yet.

**Driving and using machines**

You are advised not to drive a car or operate machinery until you know how Esciprex affects you.

**Esciprex contains lactose and sodium**

If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this medicine.

This medicine contains less than 1 mmol (23 mg) sodium per film-coated tablet, that is to say essentially 'sodium-free'.

**3. How to take Esciprex**

Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

**Adults**Depression:

The normally recommended dose is 10 mg taken as one daily dose. The dose may be increased by your doctor to a maximum of 20 mg per day.

Panic disorder:

The starting dose is 5 mg as one daily dose for the first week before increasing the dose to 10 mg per day. The dose may be further increased by your doctor to a maximum of 20 mg per day.

Social anxiety disorder:

The normally recommended dose is 10 mg taken as one daily dose. Your doctor can either decrease

your dose to 5 mg per day or increase the dose to a maximum of 20 mg per day, depending on how you respond to the medicine.

Generalised anxiety disorder:

The normally recommended dose is 10 mg taken as one daily dose. The dose may be increased by your doctor to a maximum of 20 mg per day.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder:

The normally recommended dose is 10 mg taken as one daily dose. The dose may be increased by your doctor to a maximum of 20 mg per day.

**Elderly (above 65 years of age)**

The recommended starting dose of Esciprex is 5 mg taken as one daily dose. The dose may be increased by your doctor to 10 mg per day.

**Use in children and adolescents (below 18 years of age)**

Esciprex should not normally be given to children and adolescents. For further information please see section 2 “Warnings and precautions”.

**Reduced kidney function**

Caution is advised in patients with severely reduced renal function. Take as prescribed by your doctor.

**Reduced liver function**

Patients with liver complaints should not receive more than 10 mg per day. Take as prescribed by your doctor.

**Patients known to be poor metabolisers of the enzyme CYP2C19**

Patients with this known genotype should not receive more than 10 mg per day. Take as prescribed by your doctor.

**Method of administration**

You can take Esciprex with or without food. Swallow the tablet with some water.

Only for Esciprex 10 mg: If necessary, you can divide the tablets into two equal doses.

Only for Esciprex 15 mg: If necessary, you can divide the tablets into three equal doses.

Only for Esciprex 20 mg: If necessary, you can divide the tablets into four equal doses.

**Duration of treatment**

- It may take a couple of weeks before you start to feel better. Continue to take Esciprex even if it takes some time before you feel any improvement in your condition.
- Do not change the dose of your medicine without talking to your doctor first.
- Continue to take Esciprex for as long as your doctor recommends. If you stop your treatment too soon, your symptoms may return. It is recommended that treatment should be continued for at least 6 months after you feel well again.

**If you take more Esciprex than you should**

If you take more than the prescribed dose of Esciprex, **contact your doctor or nearest hospital emergency department immediately**. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort. Some of the signs of an overdose could be dizziness, tremor, agitation, convulsion, coma, nausea, vomiting, change in heart rhythm, decreased blood pressure and change in body fluid/salt balance. Take the Esciprex box/container with you when you go to the doctor or hospital.

**If you forget to take Esciprex**

Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose. If you do forget to take a dose, and you remember before you go to bed, take it straight away. Carry on as usual the next day. If you only

remember during the night, or the next day, leave out the missed dose and carry on as usual.

**If you stop taking Esciprex:**

Do not stop taking Esciprex until your doctor tells you to do so. When you have completed your course of treatment, it is generally advised that the dose of Esciprex is gradually reduced over a number of weeks.

When you stop taking Esciprex, especially if it is abruptly, you may feel discontinuation symptoms. These are common when treatment with Esciprex is stopped. The risk is higher, when Esciprex has been used for a long time or in high doses or when the dose is reduced too quickly. Most people find that the symptoms are mild and go away on their own within 2 weeks. However, in some patients they may be severe in intensity or they may be prolonged (2-3 months or more). If you get severe discontinuation symptoms when you stop taking Esciprex, please contact your doctor. He or she may ask you to start taking your tablets again and come off them more slowly.

**Discontinuation symptoms include:** Feeling dizzy (unsteady or off-balance), feelings like pins and needles, burning sensations and (less commonly) electric shock sensations, including in the head, sleep disturbances (vivid dreams, nightmares, inability to sleep), feeling anxious, headache, feeling sick (nausea), sweating (including night sweats), feeling restless or agitated, tremor (shakiness), feeling confused or disorientated, feeling emotional or irritable, diarrhoea (loose stools), visual disturbances, fluttering or pounding heartbeat (palpitations).

Esciprex 15 mg film-coated tablets:

The tablet can be divided into three doses. If you think you will not be able to properly divide the tablet, consult your doctor. He will prescribe a lower dose tablet.

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

#### **4. Possible side effects**

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

The side effects usually disappear after a few weeks of treatment. Please be aware that many of the effects may also be symptoms of your illness and therefore will improve when you start to get better.

**If you experience any of the following symptoms you should contact your doctor or go to the hospital straight away:**

Uncommon (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)

- Unusual bleeds, including gastrointestinal bleeds.

Rare (may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people)

- Swelling of skin, tongue, lips, pharynx or face, hives or have difficulties breathing or swallowing (serious allergic reaction)
- High fever, agitation, confusion, trembling and abrupt contractions of muscles, these may be signs of a rare condition called serotonin syndrome (see section 2).

Not known (frequency cannot be estimated from the available data)

- Difficulties urinating
- Seizures (fits), see also section "Warnings and precautions"
- Yellowing of the skin and the white in the eyes are signs of liver function impairment/hepatitis
- Fast, irregular heartbeat, fainting which could be symptoms of a life-threatening condition known as Torsade de Pointes
- Thoughts of harming yourself or killing yourself, see also section "Warnings and precautions"
- Sudden swelling of skin or mucosa (angioedemas).

**In addition to above the following side effects have been reported:**

Very common (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)

- Feeling sick (nausea)
- Headache.

Common (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)

- Blocked or runny nose (sinusitis)
- Decreased or increased appetite
- Anxiety, restlessness, abnormal dreams, difficulties falling asleep, feeling sleepy, dizziness, yawning, tremors, prickling of the skin
- Diarrhoea, constipation, vomiting, dry mouth
- Increased sweating
- Pain in muscle and joints (arthralgia and myalgia)
- Sexual disturbances (delayed ejaculation, problems with erection, decreased sexual drive and women may experience difficulties achieving orgasm)
- Fatigue, fever
- Increased weight.

Uncommon (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)

- Nettle rash (urticaria), rash, itching (pruritus)
- Grinding one's teeth, agitation, nervousness, panic attack, confusion
- Taste disturbance, disturbed sleep, fainting (syncope)
- Enlarged pupils (mydriasis), visual disturbance, ringing in the ears (tinnitus)
- Loss of hair
- Excessive menstrual bleeding
- Irregular menstrual period
- Decreased weight
- Fast heartbeat
- Swelling of the arms or legs
- Nosebleeds.

Rare (may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people)

- Aggression, depersonalisation, hallucination
- Slow heartbeat.

Not known (frequency cannot be estimated from the available data)

- Decreased levels of sodium in the blood (the symptoms are feeling sick and unwell with weak muscles or confused)
- Dizziness when you stand up due to low blood pressure (orthostatic hypotension)
- Abnormal liver function test (increased amounts of liver enzymes in the blood)
- Movement disorders (involuntary movements of the muscles)
- Painful erections (priapism)
- Signs of abnormal bleeding e.g. from skin and mucous (ecchymosis)
- Increased secretion of a hormone called ADH, causing the body to retain water and dilute the blood, reducing the amount of sodium (inappropriate ADH secretion)
- Flow of milk in men and in women that are not nursing
- Mania
- Alteration of the heart rhythm (called "prolongation of QT interval", seen on ECG, electrical activity of the heart)
- Heavy vaginal bleeding shortly after giving birth (postpartum haemorrhage), see Pregnancy in section 2 for more information.

In addition, a number of side effects are known to occur with medicines that work in a similar way to escitalopram (the active ingredient of Esciprex). These are:

- Motor restlessness (akathisia)

- Loss of appetite
- Increased risk of bone fractures.

### **Reporting of side effects**

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the national reporting system: HPRA Pharmacovigilance; website: [www.hpra.ie](http://www.hpra.ie). By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

## **5. How to store Esciprex**

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the label or carton after “do not use after” or “EXP”. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

This medicine does not require any special storage conditions.

### **HDPE-bottle**

After first opening, the tablets may be stored in the opened HDPE bottle for a maximum period of 6 months. Do not store an opened bottle above 25°C.

At the end of this 6 month period, any tablets remaining in the opened HDPE bottle should not be taken and should be disposed of.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

## **6. Contents of the pack and other information**

### **What Esciprex contains**

- The active substance is escitalopram. Each film-coated tablet contains 5 mg/10 mg/15 mg/20 mg of the active substance escitalopram (as oxalate).
- The other ingredients are:

Tablet core: lactose monohydrate, microcrystalline cellulose, croscarmellose sodium, hypromellose, magnesium stearate, silica colloidal anhydrous,

Tablet coating: hypromellose, macrogol 6000, titanium dioxide (E171), talc.

### **What Esciprex looks like and contents of the pack**

Esciprex 5 mg:

The tablets are white, round film-coated tablets, with diameter of 5.7-6.3 mm.

Esciprex 10 mg:

The tablets are white, oval film-coated tablets with breaking notch on one side, with length 7.7-8.3 mm and width 5.2-5.8 mm.

Esciprex 15 mg:

The tablets are white, oval film-coated tablets with two breaking notches on both sides, with length 12.7-13.3 mm and width 4.7-5.3 mm.

Esciprex 20 mg:

The tablets are white, round film-coated tablets with cross breaking notch on both sides, with diameter of 9.2-9.8 mm.

Esciprex is available in the following pack sizes:

OPA-Al-PVC/Al blister pack in carton

7, 10, 14, 20, 28, 30, 50, 56, 56x1, 60, 60x1, 90, 98, 98x1, 100, 100x1, 200 and 500 film-coated tablets

HDPE bottles with PP screw cap including drying plug

28, 30, 56, 60, 98, 100 and 250 film-coated tablets

Not all pack sizes may be marketed.

### **Marketing Authorisation Holder and Manufacturers**

#### **Marketing Authorisation Holder**

Rowex Ltd., Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland.

#### **Manufacturers**

Lek Pharmaceuticals d.d., Verovškova 57, 1526 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Lek S.A., ul. Domaniewska 50 C, 02-672 Warszawa, Poland.

Salutas Pharma GmbH, Otto-von-Guericke-Allee 1, 39179 Barleben, Germany.

Lek S.A., Ul. Podlipie 16, 95-010 Stryków, Poland.

### **This medicinal product is authorised in the Member States of the EEA under the following names:**

Austria	Escitalopram Hexal 5 mg – Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram Hexal 10 mg – Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram Hexal 15 mg – Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram Hexal 20 mg – Filmdabletten
Ireland	Esciprex 5 mg Film-coated tablets
	Esciprex 10 mg Film-coated tablets
	Esciprex 15 mg Film-coated tablets
	Esciprex 20 mg Film-coated tablets
Germany	Escitalopram HEXAL 5 mg Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram HEXAL 10 mg Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram HEXAL 15 mg Filmdabletten
	Escitalopram HEXAL 20 mg Filmdabletten

**This leaflet was last revised in 08/2024.**