

**Package leaflet: Information for the user**  
**ARICEPT® 5 mg Film Coated Tablets**  
**ARICEPT® 10 mg Film Coated Tablets**  
Donepezil Hydrochloride

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

**1. What ARICEPT is and what it is used for**

ARICEPT contains the active substance donepezil hydrochloride. ARICEPT (donepezil hydrochloride) belongs to a group of medicines called acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. Donepezil increases the levels of a substance (acetylcholine) in the brain involved in memory function by slowing down the breakdown of acetylcholine.

It is used to treat the symptoms of dementia in people diagnosed as having mild and moderately severe Alzheimer's disease. The symptoms include increasing memory loss, confusion and behavioural changes. As a result, sufferers of Alzheimer's disease find it more and more difficult to carry out their normal daily activities.

ARICEPT is for use in adult patients only.

**2. What you need to know before you take ARICEPT**

**Do not take ARICEPT**

- if you are allergic to donepezil hydrochloride, or to piperidine derivatives, or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6).

**Warnings and precautions**

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking ARICEPT if you have or have had:

- stomach or duodenal ulcers
- seizures (fits) or convulsions
- a heart condition (such as irregular or very slow heart beat, heart failure, myocardial infarction)
- a heart condition called 'prolonged QT interval' or a history of certain abnormal heart rhythms called Torsade de Pointes or if anyone in your family has 'prolonged QT interval'
- low levels of magnesium or potassium in your blood
- asthma or other long term lung disease
- liver problems or hepatitis
- difficulty passing urine or mild kidney disease

Also tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.

**Children and adolescents**

ARICEPT is not recommended for use in children and adolescents (younger than 18 years of age).

**Other medicines and ARICEPT**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines. This includes medicines that your doctor has not prescribed for you but which you have bought yourself from a chemist/pharmacist. It also applies to medicines you may take some time in the future if you continue to take ARICEPT. This is because these medicines may weaken or strengthen the effects of ARICEPT.

In particular it is important to tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following types of medicines:

- medicines for heart rhythm problems e.g. amiodarone, sotalol
- medicines for depression e.g. citalopram, escitalopram, amitriptyline, fluoxetine
- medicines for psychosis e.g. pimozide, sertindole, ziprasidone
- medicines for bacterial infections e.g. clarithromycin, erythromycin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, rifampicin
- anti-fungal medicines e.g. ketoconazole
- other Alzheimer's disease medicines, e.g. galantamine
- pain killers or treatment for arthritis e.g. aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drugs such as ibuprofen, or diclofenac sodium
- anticholinergic medicines, e.g. tolterodine
- anticonvulsants e.g. phenytoin, carbamazepine
- medication for a heart condition e.g. quinidine, beta-blockers (propranolol and atenolol)
- muscle relaxants e.g. diazepam, succinylcholine
- general anaesthetic
- medicines obtained without a prescription e.g. herbal remedies

If you are going to have an operation that requires you to have a general anaesthetic, you should tell your doctor and the anaesthetist that you are taking ARICEPT. This is because your medicine may affect the amount of anaesthetic needed.

ARICEPT can be used in patients with kidney disease or mild to moderate liver disease. Tell your doctor first if you have kidney or liver disease. Patients with severe liver disease should not take ARICEPT.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist the name of your caregiver. Your caregiver will help you to take your medicine as it is prescribed.

**ARICEPT with food, drink and alcohol**

Food will not influence the effect of ARICEPT.

ARICEPT should not be taken with alcohol because alcohol may change its effect.

**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 any medicine.

ARICEPT should not be used while breast-feeding.

**Driving and using machines**

Alzheimer's disease may impair your ability to drive or operate machinery and you must not perform these activities unless your doctor tells you that it is safe to do so.

Also, your medicine can cause tiredness, dizziness and muscle cramp. If you experience any of these effects you must not drive or operate machinery.

**ARICEPT contains lactose**

If you have been told by your doctor that you have intolerance to some sugars, you should contact your doctor before taking ARICEPT.

### **3. How to take ARICEPT**

#### **How much ARICEPT should you take**

Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure. Initially, the recommended dose is 5 mg (one white tablet) every night before you go to bed. After one month, your doctor may tell you to take 10 mg (one yellow tablet) every night before you go to bed.

If you experience abnormal dreams, nightmares or difficulty in sleeping (see section 4) your doctor may advise you to take ARICEPT in the morning.

The tablet strength you will take may change depending on the length of time you have been taking the medicine and on what your doctor recommends. The maximum recommended dose is 10 mg each night.

Always follow your doctor or pharmacist's advice about how and when to take your medicine. Do not alter the dose yourself without your doctor's advice.

#### **How to take your medicine**

Swallow your ARICEPT tablet with a drink of water before you go to bed at night.

#### **Use in Children and adolescents**

ARICEPT is not recommended for use in children and adolescents (younger than 18 years of age).

#### **If you take more ARICEPT than you should**

Contact your doctor or the nearest hospital emergency department immediately if you take more of the medicine than you should. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets with you.

Overdose symptoms may include nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting (being sick), drooling, sweating, slow heart rate, low blood pressure (light-headedness or dizziness when standing), breathing problems, losing consciousness and seizures (fits) or convulsions.

#### **If you forget to take ARICEPT**

If you forget to take your medicine, take the next dose at the usual time. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten tablet.

If you forget to take your medicine for more than one week, call your doctor before taking any more medicine.

#### **If you stop taking ARICEPT**

Do not stop taking the tablets unless told to do so by your doctor. If you stop taking ARICEPT, the benefits of your treatment will gradually fade away.

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

#### **For how long should you take ARICEPT**

Your doctor or pharmacist will advise you on how long you should continue to take your tablets. You will need to see your doctor from time to time to review your treatment and assess your symptoms.

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

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

The following side effects have been reported by people taking ARICEPT.

**Tell your doctor if you have any of these effects while you are taking ARICEPT.**

**Serious side effects**

You must tell your doctor immediately if you notice these serious side effects mentioned. You may need urgent medical treatment.

- liver damage e.g. hepatitis. The symptoms of hepatitis are nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting (being sick), loss of appetite, feeling generally unwell, fever, itching, yellowing of the skin and eyes, and dark coloured urine (may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people)
- stomach or duodenal ulcers. The symptoms of ulcers are stomach pain and discomfort (indigestion) felt between the navel and the breast bone (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)
- bleeding in the stomach or intestines. This may cause you to pass black tar like stools or visible blood from the rectum (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)
- seizures (fits) or convulsions (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)
- fever with muscle stiffness, sweating or a lowered level of consciousness (a disorder called “Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome”) (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)
- muscle weakness, tenderness or pain and particularly, if at the same time, you feel unwell, have a high temperature or have dark urine. They may be caused by an abnormal muscle breakdown which can be life threatening and lead to kidney problems (a condition called rhabdomyolysis) (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people)
- fast, irregular heart beat and fainting, which could be symptoms of a life-threatening condition known as Torsade de Pointes (frequency cannot be estimated from the available data)

**Other side effects**

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

- diarrhoea
- headache

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):

- muscle cramp
- tiredness
- difficulty in sleeping (insomnia)
- the common cold
- hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- unusual dreams including nightmares
- agitation
- aggressive behaviour
- fainting
- dizziness
- stomach feeling uncomfortable
- rash
- passing urine uncontrollably
- pain
- accidents (patients may be more prone to falls and accidental injury)

Uncommon side effects (may affect up to 1 in 100 people):

- slow heart beat
- salivary hypersecretion

Rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 1000 people):

- stiffness, shaking or uncontrollable movement especially of the face and tongue but also of the limbs

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

- Changes in the heart activity which can be seen on an electro-cardiogram (ECG) called ‘prolonged QT interval’
- libido increased, hypersexuality
- Pisa syndrome (a condition involving involuntary muscle contraction with abnormal bending of the body and head to one side)

### **Reporting of side effects**

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via 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 ARICEPT**

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 outer carton and blister or bottle (EXP). The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not store this medicine above 30°C.

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

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

### **What ARICEPT film coated tablets contain**

- The active substance is donepezil hydrochloride. Two different strengths of tablets are available. Each 5 mg film coated tablet contains 5 mg of donepezil hydrochloride and each 10 mg film coated tablet contains 10 mg of donepezil hydrochloride.
- The other ingredients are lactose monohydrate, maize starch, cellulose microcrystalline, hypromellose, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, talc, macrogol, and titanium dioxide (E171).
- Additionally, the 10 mg film coated tablet contains synthetic yellow iron oxide (E172).

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

- ARICEPT 5 mg film coated tablets are white, round, biconvex tablets marked ‘ARICEPT’ on one side and ‘5’ on the other side.
- ARICEPT 10 mg film coated tablets are yellow, round, biconvex tablets marked ‘ARICEPT’ on one side and ‘10’ on the other side.

**ARICEPT** is available in packs of :

- 7, 14, 28, 30, 50, 56, 60, 84, 98, 112 and 120 film coated tablets in blister packs
- 28, 30 and 100 film coated tablets in HDPE bottles

Not all pack sizes may be marketed

### **Marketing Authorisation Holder and Manufacturer**

Marketing Authorisation Holder:

Pfizer Healthcare Ireland Unlimited Company,

The Watermarque Building,  
Ringsend Road,  
Dublin 4,  
D04 K7N3,  
Ireland

Manufacturer:  
Fareva Amboise  
Zone Industrielle  
29, Route des Industries  
37530 Pocé-sur-Cisse  
France

**This medicine is authorised in the Member States of the European Economic Area and in the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) under the following names:**

| <b>Name of the Member State</b>                                                                                                | <b>Name of the medicinal product</b>     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Austria, Belgium, France, Portugal, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), Germany, Denmark, Greece, Finland, Ireland & Luxembourg | Aricept 5 mg & 10 mg Film Coated Tablets |
| Italy & Sweden                                                                                                                 | Aricept                                  |

**This leaflet was last revised in 10/2024.**

Ref: AR 28\_1

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