

Package leaflet: Information for the patient

Bulexin 2 mg/0.5 mg sublingual tablets

Bulexin 4 mg/1 mg sublingual tablets

Bulexin 8 mg/2 mg sublingual tablets

buprenorphine/naloxone

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

1. What Bulexin is and what it is used for

Bulexin is used to treat dependence on opioid (narcotic) drugs such as heroin or morphine in drug addicts who have agreed to be treated for their addiction. Bulexin is used in adults and adolescents over 15 years of age, who are also receiving medical, social and psychological support.

2. What you need to know before you take Bulexin

Do not take Bulexin

- if you are allergic (hypersensitive) to buprenorphine, naloxone or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (see section 6)
- if you have **serious breathing problems**
- if you have **serious liver problems**
- if you are intoxicated due to alcohol or have trembling, sweating, anxiety, confusion, or hallucinations caused by alcohol.
- if you are taking naltrexone or nalmefene for the treatment of alcohol or opioid dependence.

Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor before taking Bulexin if you have:

- asthma or other breathing problems
- any liver disease such as hepatitis
- low blood pressure
- recently suffered a head injury or brain disease
- a urinary disorder (especially linked to enlarged prostate in men)
- any kidney disease
- thyroid problems
- adrenocortical disorder (e.g. Addison's disease)
- depression or other conditions that are treated with antidepressants.

The use of these medicines together with Bulexin can lead to serotonin syndrome, a potentially life-threatening condition (see “Other medicines and Bulexin”).

Important things to be aware of:

- **Additional monitoring**

You may be more closely monitored by your doctor if you are below the age of 18 or over the age of 65. This medicine should not be taken by those under 15 years of age.

- **Misuse and abuse**

This medicine can be a target for people who abuse prescription medicines, and should be kept in a safe place to protect it from theft. **Do not give this medicine to anyone else.** It can cause death or otherwise harm them.

- **Breathing problems**

Some people have died from respiratory failure (inability to breathe) because they misused this medicine or took it in combination with other central nervous system depressants, such as alcohol, benzodiazepines (tranquilisers), or other opioids.

This medicine may cause severe, possibly fatal, respiratory depression (reduced ability to breathe) in children and non-dependent people who accidentally or deliberately take it.

- **Sleep-related breathing disorders**

Bulexin can cause sleep-related breathing disorders such as sleep apnoea (breathing pauses during sleep) and sleep related hypoxemia (low oxygen level in the blood). The symptoms can include breathing pauses during sleep, night awakening due to shortness of breath, difficulties to maintain sleep or excessive drowsiness during the day. If you or another person observe these symptoms, contact your doctor. A dose reduction may be considered by your doctor.

- **Dependence**

This product can cause dependence.

- **Withdrawal symptoms**

This medicine can cause withdrawal symptoms if you take it less than six hours after you use a short-acting opioid (e.g. morphine, heroin) or less than 24 hours after you use a long-acting opioid such as methadone.

Bulexin can also cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking it abruptly.

- **Liver damage**

Liver damage has been reported after taking Bulexin, especially when the medicine is misused. This could also be due to viral infections (chronic hepatitis C), alcohol abuse, anorexia or use of other medicines with the ability to harm your liver (see section 4). **Regular blood tests may be conducted by your doctor to monitor the condition of your liver. Tell your doctor if you have any liver problems before you start treatment with Bulexin.**

- **Blood pressure**

This product may cause your blood pressure to drop suddenly, causing you to feel dizzy if you get up too quickly from sitting or lying down.

- **Diagnosis of unrelated medical conditions**

This medicine may mask pain symptoms that could assist in the diagnosis of some diseases. Do not forget to advise your doctor if you take this medicine.

Other medicines and Bulexin

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

Some medicines may increase the side effects of Bulexin and may sometimes cause very serious reactions.

Do not take any other medicines whilst taking Bulexin without first talking to your doctor, especially:

- Concomitant use of Bulexin and sedative medicines such as **benzodiazepines** (used to treat anxiety or sleep disorders) or related drugs increases the risk of drowsiness, difficulties in breathing (respiratory depression), coma and may be life-threatening. Because of this, concomitant use should only be considered when other treatment options are not possible.

However, if your doctor does prescribe Bulexin together with sedative medicines the dose and duration of concomitant treatment should be limited by your doctor.

Please tell your doctor about all sedative medicines you are taking, and follow your doctor's dose recommendation closely. It could be helpful to inform friends or relatives to be aware of the signs and symptoms stated above. Contact your doctor when experiencing such symptoms.

- **Other medicines that may make you feel sleepy which are** used to treat illnesses such as anxiety, sleeplessness, convulsions/seizures, pain. These types of medicines will reduce your alertness levels making it difficult for you to drive and use machines. They may also cause central nervous system depression, which is very serious. Below is a list of examples of these types of medicines:

- other opioid containing medicines such as methadone, certain pain killers and cough suppressants
- anti-depressants (used to treat depression) such as isocarboxazid, phenelzine, selegiline, tranylcypromine and valproate may increase the effects of this medicine.
- sedative H₁ receptor antagonists (used to treat allergic reactions) such as diphenhydramine and chlorphenamine.
- barbiturates (used to cause sleep or sedation) such as Phenobarbital, secobarbital
- tranquilisers (used to cause sleep or sedation) such as chloral hydrate.

- clonidine (used to treat high blood pressure) may extend the effects of this medicine.
- anti-retrovirals (used to treat HIV) such as ritonavir, nelfinavir, indinavir may increase the effects of this medicine.
- some antifungal agents (used to treat fungal infections) such as ketoconazole, itraconazole, certain antibiotics, may extend the effects of this medicine.
- some medicines may decrease the effect of Bulexin. These include medicines used to treat epilepsy (such as carbamazepine and phenytoin), and medicines used to treat tuberculosis (rifampicin).
- Naltrexone and nalmefene (drugs used to treat addiction disorders) may prevent the therapeutic effects of Bulexin. They should not be taken at the same time as Bulexin treatment because you may experience a sudden onset of prolonged and intense withdrawal.
- anti-depressants such as moclobemide, tranylcypromine, citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, paroxetine, sertraline, duloxetine, venlafaxine, amitriptyline, doxepine, or trimipramine. These medicines may interact with Bulexin and you may experience symptoms such as involuntary, rhythmic contractions of muscles, including the muscles that control movement of the eye, agitation, hallucinations, coma, excessive sweating, tremor, exaggeration of reflexes, increased muscle tension, body temperature above 38°C. Contact your doctor when experiencing such symptoms.

Bulexin with food, drink and alcohol

Alcohol may increase drowsiness and may increase the risk of respiratory failure if taken with Bulexin. **Do not take Bulexin together with alcohol.** Do not swallow or consume food or any drink until the tablet is completely dissolved.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor for advice before taking this medicine.

The risks of using Bulexin in pregnant women are not known. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant. Your doctor will decide if your treatment should be continued with an alternative medicine.

When taken during pregnancy, particularly late pregnancy, medicines like Bulexin may cause drug withdrawal symptoms including problems with breathing in your newborn baby. This may appear several days after birth.

Do not breast-feed whilst taking this medicine, since Bulexin passes into breast milk.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking any medicine.

Driving and using machines

Bulexin may cause drowsiness. This may happen more often in the first few weeks of treatment when your dose is being changed, but can also happen if you drink alcohol or take other sedative medicines when you take Bulexin. Do not drive, use any tools or machines, or perform dangerous activities until you know how this medicine affects you.

Bulexin 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 sodium (23 mg) per tablet, that is to say essentially 'sodium-free'.

3. How to take Bulexin

Your treatment is prescribed and monitored by doctors who are experienced in the treatment of drug dependence.

Your doctor will determine the best dose for you. During your treatment, the doctor may adjust the dose, depending upon your response.

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

Starting treatment

The recommended starting dose for adults and adolescents over the age of 15 years is one to two tablets of Bulexin 2 mg/0.5 mg. An additional one to two tablets of the Bulexin 2 mg/0.5 mg may be administered on day 1 depending on your needs.

Clear signs of withdrawal should be evident before taking your first dose of Bulexin. A doctor's assessment of your readiness for treatment will guide the timing of your first Bulexin dose.

- Starting treatment of Bulexin whilst dependent on heroin
If you are dependent upon heroin or a short acting opioid, your first dose of Bulexin should be taken when signs of withdrawal appear, but not less than 6 hours after you last used opioids.
- Starting treatment of Bulexin whilst dependent on methadone
If you have been taking methadone or a long acting opioid, the dose of methadone should ideally be reduced to below 30 mg/day before beginning Bulexin therapy. The first dose of Bulexin should be taken when signs of withdrawal appear, but not less than 24 hours after you last used methadone.

Taking Bulexin

- Take the dose once a day by placing the tablets under the tongue.
- Keep the tablets in place under the tongue until they have **completely dissolved**. This may take 5-10 minutes.
- Do not chew or swallow the tablets, as the medicine will not work and you may get withdrawal symptoms.
- Do not consume any food or drink until the tablets have completely dissolved.

Dosage adjustment and maintenance therapy:

During the days after you start treatment, your doctor may increase the dose of Bulexin you take according to your needs. If you have the impression that the effect of Bulexin is too strong or too weak, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. The maximum daily dose is 24 mg.

After a time of successful treatment, you may agree with your doctor to reduce the dose gradually to a lower maintenance dose.

Stopping treatment

Depending on your condition, the dose of Bulexin may continue to be reduced under careful medical supervision, until eventually it may be stopped.

Do not change the treatment in any way or stop treatment without the agreement of the doctor who is treating you.

If you take more Bulexin than you should

If you or someone else takes too much of this medicine, you must go or be taken immediately to an emergency centre or hospital for treatment as **overdose** with Bulexin may cause serious and life-threatening breathing problems.

Symptoms of overdose may include feeling sleepy and uncoordinated with slowed reflexes, blurred vision, and/or slurred speech. You may be unable to think clearly, and may breathe much slower than is normal for you.

If you forget to take Bulexin

Tell your doctor as soon as possible if you miss a dose.

If you stop taking Bulexin

Do not change the treatment in any way or stop treatment without the agreement of the doctor who is treating you. **Stopping treatment suddenly may cause withdrawal symptoms.**

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.

Tell your doctor immediately or seek urgent medical attention if you experience side effects, such as:

- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing, severe hives/nettle rash. These may be signs of a life-threatening allergic reaction.
- feeling sleepy and uncoordinated, have blurred vision, have slurred speech, cannot think well or clearly, or your breathing gets much slower than is normal for you.

Also tell your doctor immediately if you experience side effects such as:

- severe tiredness, itching with yellowing of skin or eyes. These may be symptoms of liver damage.
- seeing or hearing things that are not there (hallucinations).

Side effects reported with Bulexin
<i>Very common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):</i>
Insomnia (inability to sleep), constipation, nausea, excessive sweating, headache, drug withdrawal syndrome.
<i>Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):</i>
Weight loss, swelling (hands and feet), drowsiness, anxiety, nervousness, tingling, depression, decreased sexual drive, increase in muscle tension, abnormal thinking, increased tearing (watering eyes) or other tearing disorder, blurred vision, flushing, increased blood pressure, migraines, runny nose, sore throat and painful swallowing, increased cough, upset stomach or other stomach discomfort, diarrhoea, abnormal liver function, flatulence, vomiting, rash, itching, hives, pain, joint pain, muscle pain, leg cramps (muscle spasm), difficulty in getting or keeping an erection, urine abnormality, abdominal pain, back pain, weakness, infection, chills, chest pain, fever, flu-like symptoms, feeling of general discomfort, accidental injury caused by loss of alertness or co-ordination, faintness and dizziness.
<i>Uncommon side effects (may affect up to 1 in 100 people):</i>
Swollen glands (lymph nodes), agitation, tremor, abnormal dream, excessive muscle activity, depersonalisation (not feeling like yourself), medicine dependence, amnesia (memory disturbance), loss of interest, exaggerated feeling of well-being, convulsion (fits), speech disorder, small pupil size, difficulty urinating, eye inflammation or infection, rapid or slow heartbeat, low blood pressure, palpitations, myocardial infarction (heart attack), chest tightness, shortness of breath, asthma, yawning, pain and sores in mouth, tongue discolouration, acne, skin nodule, hair loss, dry or scaling skin, inflammation of joints, urinary tract infection, abnormal blood tests, blood in urine, abnormal ejaculation, menstrual or vaginal

problems, kidney stone, protein in your urine, painful or difficult urination, sensitivity to heat or cold, heat stroke, loss of appetite, feelings of hostility.

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

Sudden withdrawal syndrome caused by taking **Bulexin** too soon after use of illicit opioids, drug withdrawal syndrome in newborn. Slow or difficult breathing, liver injury with or without jaundice, hallucinations, swelling of face and throat or life threatening allergic reactions, drop in blood pressure on changing position from sitting or lying down to standing.

Misusing this medicine by injecting it can cause withdrawal symptoms, infections, other skin reactions and potentially serious liver problems (see Warnings and precautions).

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via HPRRA Pharmacovigilance, Website: www.hpra.ie. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store Bulexin

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 blister and carton. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not store above 30°C.

Bulexin can be a target for people who abuse prescription medicine. Keep this medicine in a safe place to protect it from theft.

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 Bulexin contains

- The active substances are buprenorphine and naloxone.
Each 2 mg/0.5 mg sublingual tablet contains 2 mg buprenorphine (as hydrochloride) and 0.5 mg naloxone (as hydrochloride dihydrate).
- Each 4 mg/1 mg sublingual tablet contains 4 mg buprenorphine (as hydrochloride) and 1 mg naloxone (as hydrochloride dihydrate).
- Each 8 mg/2 mg sublingual tablet contains 8 mg buprenorphine (as hydrochloride) and 2 mg naloxone (as hydrochloride dihydrate).
- The other ingredients are lactose monohydrate, mannitol, maize starch, povidone citric acid monohydrate, sodium citrate, magnesium stearate, acesulfame potassium, lemon flavour 01600158 (contains: lime oil, lime terpenes, lemon oil, maltodextrin, stabiliser E414), lime flavour 01620018 (lime oil, maltodextrin, stabiliser E414).

What Bulexin looks like and contents of the pack

Bulexin are white to off-white, round and biconvex sublingual tablets, with score line on one side. The tablet can be divided into equal doses.

The tablets are packaged in blisters in cardboard boxes containing 7; 28; 49 or 56 tablets or in unit-dose blisters of 7x1, 28x1, 49x1 or 56x1 tablets.

Not all pack sizes may be marketed.

Marketing Authorisation Holder and Manufacturer

Pinewood Laboratories Ltd., Ballymacabry, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

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

Ireland:

Bulexin 2 mg/0.5 mg sublingual tablets

Bulexin 4 mg/1 mg sublingual tablets

Bulexin 8 mg/2 mg sublingual tablets

This leaflet was last revised in January 2025.