

# Patient advice sheet

## Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics:

What you need to know about side effects

### What antibiotics are involved?

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics are used to treat serious and life-threatening infections and include ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, ofloxacin and delafloxacin.

### What do I need to know?

These antibiotics are carefully chosen based on the type of infection you have, or in some cases, infections we are trying to prevent, and your individual circumstances, for example, known allergies. It is important that we have the correct and most up-to-date information for you, so please discuss any allergies with your healthcare professional.

Although most patients tolerate these antibiotics well, very few patients may develop serious side effects that involve tendons, muscles, joints, and nerves.

Taking a steroid in addition to a fluoroquinolone antibiotic may increase the risk of tendon problems. This risk will be carefully considered by your doctor on a risk / benefit basis.

### The following patients may also have a higher risk of side effects:

- If you are over 60 years of age
- If your kidneys do not work well
- If you have had an organ transplant
- If you suffer from depression or psychiatric problems - as this treatment may cause changes to your mood or behaviour including confusion, disorientation, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.
- If you have epilepsy or any other condition that causes fits
- If you have a history of tendon damage/rupture
- If you have a pre-existing aortic aneurysm and/or aortic dissection or a family history of aneurysm disease.
- If you have a connective tissue disorder such as Marfan syndrome or Ehlers-Danlos syndrome

It is therefore important that you discuss any concerns with your healthcare professional before starting treatment.

## How likely are these side-effects?

From the currently available data it is not possible to calculate exactly how frequent these side effects occur. The best estimate is up to 1 patient in every 1000 treated with these antibiotics could be affected.

**STOP** taking the antibiotic if you experience any of the following side effects  
**AND** contact your doctor or the specialist unit / team looking after you.  
If you are unable to see your doctor, call 111 for advice.

- Tendon pain or swelling, often beginning in the ankle or calf
- Pain in your joints or swelling in your shoulder, arms or legs
- Abdominal pain or unusual sensations (such as persistent pins and needles, tingling, numbness or burning), weakness in your body, especially in your legs or arms or difficulty walking
- Severe tiredness or sleepiness, depressed mood, anxiety or memory problems
- Changes in your vision, taste, smell or hearing

In addition to contacting your doctor, you can also report side effects to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) through the Yellow Card Scheme [www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk). You can also view the patient information leaflet for fluoroquinolones on the MHRA website via the QR code:



## Why have I been given this leaflet?

You will only be given this medication if your healthcare professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, pharmacist) feels that the benefits of fighting an infection are greater than the potential side effects. This will have been discussed with you. Early identification of side effects is essential to reduce further complications.

You may not notice some changes in your mood and behaviour, so it is very important to tell your friends and family that you are taking these medicines, and that they may have psychiatric side effects associated with them – others may notice changes and help you quickly identify any symptoms and that you need to talk to your doctor about.

**What should I do if I am worried about the side effects?**

Tell your doctor, pharmacist, other healthcare professional or call 111.

## How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Keep your hands clean to help prevent infections. Follow our infection prevention guidelines when visiting healthcare settings. Details on handwashing is available via QR codes below:



UKHSA website -



NHS website -

## Alternative formats

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