

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics

(ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, ofloxacin, delafloxacin
and moxifloxacin)

What are fluoroquinolones?

Fluoroquinolones are antibiotics used to treat serious bacterial infections. They are often prescribed when other antibiotics are not effective or suitable for you. Your doctor will provide the shortest course needed for your treatment.

What are the side effects of fluoroquinolones?

In a small number of patients, fluoroquinolones can cause serious side effects. A complete list of side effects can be found in the medication box.

Stop taking your fluoroquinolone antibiotic and contact your doctor straight away if you notice:

- Pain or swelling in tendons (often in the ankle or calf). Rest the area until you see your doctor. This can happen within 2 days of starting treatment or even months after stopping.
- Pain or swelling in your joints, shoulders, arms, or legs.
- Unusual feelings like pins and needles, tingling, numbness, burning, weakness (especially in arms or legs), or trouble walking.
- Extreme tiredness, low mood, thoughts of suicide, anxiety, panic attacks, confusion, memory problems, or severe trouble sleeping.
- Changes in your vision, taste, smell, or hearing

Other side effects

If you have epilepsy or have had seizures, talk to your doctor before starting treatment. These antibiotics can increase seizure risk.

How common are the side effects?

It is hard to say how often these side effects happen. Recent data show that 1 to 10 out of every 10,000 people taking fluoroquinolones experience one or more side effects.

This means that for every 10,000 people who take a fluoroquinolone tablet, between 1 and 10 people will experience a bad reaction.

What to do if you have any side effects

If you have any side effects, please inform the doctor who prescribed your treatment.

You can also report side effects to the MHRA using the Yellow Card scheme.

Yellow Card

Website: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

Who is at most risk?

- People over 60 years old.
- People with kidney problems.
- People who have had an organ transplant.
- People taking steroid tablets (for example hydrocortisone or prednisolone).

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or think you may be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking this medicine.

Food and medicine interactions

Certain foods and drinks can affect the effectiveness of fluoroquinolones.

- Dairy products such as milk or yoghurt and drinks with added calcium can stop the antibiotic from working. Avoid dairy products for 2 hours before and after taking the antibiotic.
- Iron supplements should be avoided for up to 2 hours before and after taking the antibiotic.
- Antacids such as Rennie or Gaviscon should be taken 2 hours before or 4 hours after taking the antibiotic.

Further information

- Only use antibiotics when your doctor prescribes them.
- Always follow the instructions carefully.
- Do not reuse any leftover antibiotics without a medical prescription, even if you want to treat a similar illness.
- Complete the full course of your antibiotic.

Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns after reading this leaflet, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist. They will be happy to answer any of them.

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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