

Respiratory

Carbocisteine and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Carbocisteine is a type of medicine called a mucolytic. Mucolytics cause mucus to be less sticky and easier to cough up. Carbocisteine is also known by its brand name Mucodyne.

Carbocisteine is used to help treat respiratory tract problems - problems with breathing passages in your lungs.

How carbocisteine works

Some people with COPD cough up phlegm (also called mucus or sputum). That phlegm can sometimes be difficult to cough up. Carbocisteine can help you cough up the phlegm by making it less thick and sticky.

Before you take carbocisteine

Carbocisteine is not suitable for some people. Tell your doctor or specialist nurse before taking this medicine if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to carbocisteine or any other medicine in the past
- have a stomach ulcer or if you have had a stomach ulcer in the past
- are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, or breastfeeding

Carbocisteine capsules contain lactose (a type of sugar). Speak to your doctor or specialist nurse if you cannot tolerate some sugars.



Patient Information

How to take carbocisteine

Carbocisteine is usually prescribed as capsules. The usual starting dose is two 375mg capsules, taken 3 times a day. This may be decreased if your symptoms improve.

Carbocisteine also comes as a syrup for people who find it difficult to swallow capsules. If you are prescribed the syrup, use the plastic spoon or syringe that comes with it to measure out the correct dose. Do not use a kitchen spoon - this will not give you the correct amount.

If you forget to take a dose

This should not cause any problems. Just take your next dose as planned.

Do not take 2 doses at the same time. Do not take an extra dose to make up for a forgotten one.

Side effects

If you are taking carbocisteine capsules or syrup, you are unlikely to have side effects.

For more information on side effects please see the manufacturer's patient information leaflet - this will be in the box of medicines.

Stop taking carbocisteine and see your doctor or go to A&E immediately if:

- You have an **allergic reaction**. Signs may include wheezing, difficulty breathing or swallowing, dizziness, swelling of the eyelids, face, lips, tongue, or throat, itchy skin rash affecting the whole body.
- You have blistering or bleeding of the skin, including around your lips, eyes, mouth, nose, and genitals. You may also have flu-like symptoms and fever.
- You have bleeding from the stomach or intestine – this may be seen as black, tar-like stools or blood in your vomit.

How long you'll be on carbocisteine

If carbocisteine helps you cough up phlegm, you'll remain on this medicine long-term.

Other advice

Phlegm is largely made up of water and if you do not have a good fluid intake it will become stickier and more difficult to clear.

It is important to stay well hydrated. Water is the best option along with sugar-free squash and decaffeinated tea and coffee. If you have been told to restrict your fluid intake to a set amount each day, please continue to follow this advice.

It's also important to stay as active as you can and move around regularly. When you sit still, your breathing becomes shallower, and you are less likely to clear phlegm from your lungs easily.

A physiotherapist can show you techniques to clear the phlegm.

More information

If you have any other questions, speak to the specialist doctor or nurse who prescribed you the carbocisteine.

Contact details

Community COPD service

024 7696 4167

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 4167 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Patient Information

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