

RANITIDINE

Brand names Boots Heartburn Relief Tablets, Gavilast, Ranitic, Zantac

Used in the following combined preparations None

GENERAL INFORMATION

Ranitidine is an anti-ulcer drug of the antihistamine (H₂) antagonist type (known as H₂ blockers). It reduces acid production by the stomach, allowing ulcers to heal, and is usually given in courses lasting four to eight weeks, with further courses if symptoms recur. In combination with antibiotics, ranitidine may be used for ulcers caused by *Helicobacter pylori* infection. It may also be used to protect against ulcers in people taking NSAIDs (p.74), and to reduce the discomfort and ulceration of oesophagitis. In medical practice, ranitidine has been largely replaced by

newer proton pump inhibitor anti-ulcer drugs, such as omeprazole. It is available over-the-counter for the short-term treatment of heartburn and indigestion in those over 16 years old. Unlike the similar drug cimetidine, ranitidine does not increase blood levels of other drugs such as anticoagulants and anticonvulsants. Most people experience no serious side effects during treatment. As ranitidine promotes healing of the stomach lining, there is a risk that it might mask stomach cancer. It is therefore prescribed only when this possibility has been ruled out.

QUICK REFERENCE

Drug group Anti-ulcer drug (p.67)

Overdose danger rating Low

Dependence rating Low

Prescription needed No (tablets in limited quantities). Yes (other preparations)

Available as generic Yes

INFORMATION FOR USERS

Your drug prescription is tailored for you. Do not alter dosage without checking with your doctor. For over-the-counter preparations, follow the instructions and call your doctor if symptoms worsen.

How taken/used



Tablets, effervescent tablets, liquid, injection.

Frequency and timing of doses

Once daily at bedtime or 2–4 x daily.

Adult dosage range

150mg–6g daily, depending on the condition being treated. Usual dose is 150mg twice daily.

Onset of effect

Within 1 hour.

Duration of action

12 hours.

Diet advice

None.

Storage

Keep in original container at room temperature out of the reach of children. Protect from light.

Missed dose

Take as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 3 hours, take a single dose now and skip the next.

Stopping the drug

Do not stop the drug without consulting your doctor; symptoms may recur.

Exceeding the dose

An occasional unintentional extra dose is unlikely to be a cause for concern. But if you notice any unusual symptoms, or if a large overdose has been taken, notify your doctor.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Be sure to consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking this drug if:

- You have long-term liver or kidney problems.
- You have porphyria.
- You are taking other medicines.



Pregnancy

Safety in pregnancy not established. Discuss with your doctor.



Breast-feeding

The drug passes into the breast milk and may affect the baby. Discuss with your doctor.



Infants and children

Reduced dose necessary.



Over 60

No special problems.



Driving and hazardous work

Usually no problems. Dizziness can occur in a very small proportion of patients.



Alcohol

Avoid. Alcohol may aggravate your underlying condition and reduce the beneficial effects of this drug.

POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The adverse effects of ranitidine, of which headache is the most common, are usually

related to dosage level and almost always disappear when treatment finishes.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Headache/dizziness	●		●			
Nausea/vomiting		●	●			
Constipation		●	●			
Diarrhoea		●	●			
Jaundice		●		●		
Mental problems/agitation		●		●		
Sore throat/fever		●		●		●

INTERACTIONS

Ketoconazole Ranitidine may reduce the absorption of ketoconazole. Ranitidine should be taken at least 2 hours after ketoconazole.

Glipizide Ranitidine may increase the absorption of glipizide.

Sucralfate High doses (2g) of sucralfate may reduce the absorption of ranitidine. Sucralfate should be taken at least 2 hours after ranitidine.

Theophylline/aminophylline Ranitidine may increase blood levels of these drugs.

PROLONGED USE

No problems expected.