

ALGINATES

Brand names [dressings] Algisite M, Algosteril, Kaltostat, Melgisorb, SeaSorb, Sorbalgon, Sorbsan; [oral] Gaviscon Infant
Used in the following combined preparations Acidex, Gastrocote, Gaviscon, Peptac, Rennie Duo, Topal

GENERAL INFORMATION

“Alginates” is a group term that refers to a mixture of compounds extracted from brown algae (seaweeds). When the powder extract is mixed with water, alginates become a thick viscous fluid or gel depending on the chemicals used. Alginates combined with antacids form a “raft” that floats on the surface of the stomach contents, which reduces reflux and protects the lining of the oesophagus from attack by acid

regurgitated from the stomach. Many of these combined preparations of alginates are used to treat mild gastro-oesophageal reflux disease. A number of indigestion remedies on sale to the public also contain alginates.

The properties of alginates are also used in wound dressings where, in the form of a woven pad, they absorb fluids from the surface of the wound, keeping it moist and allowing it to heal.

QUICK REFERENCE

Drug group Antacid (p.66)
Overdose danger rating Low
Dependence rating Low
Prescription needed No
Available as generic Yes

INFORMATION FOR USERS

Follow instructions on the label. Call your doctor if symptoms worsen.

How taken/used



Chewable tablets, liquid, powder.

Frequency and timing of doses
 4 x daily after meals and at bedtime.

Adult dosage range
 800–2,000mg daily.

Onset of effect
 10–20 minutes.

Duration of action
 3–4 hours.

Diet advice
 None.

Storage
 Keep in original container at room temperature out of the reach of children.

Missed dose
 Take as soon as you remember, if you need it.

Stopping the drug
 Alginates can be safely stopped as soon as you no longer need them.

Exceeding the dose
 Overdose of alginates is likely to produce abdominal distension, without any other symptoms. Notify your doctor if symptoms are severe.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Be sure to tell your doctor if:

- You are on a salt-restricted diet.
- You are taking other medicines.



Pregnancy
 No evidence of risk to developing baby. Some products can be used for heartburn in pregnancy.



Breast-feeding
 No evidence of risk.



Infants and children
 Reduced dose necessary.



Over 60
 No special problems.



Driving and hazardous work
 No known problems.



Alcohol
 No known problems.

POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The antacid salts used in combined oral preparations of alginates may cause abdominal discomfort and distension.

| Symptom/effect | Frequency | | Discuss with doctor | | Stop taking drug now | Call doctor now |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | Common | Rare | Only if severe | In all cases | | |
| Stomach distension | ● | | ● | | | |
| Nausea | | ● | ● | | | |

INTERACTIONS

None.

PROLONGED USE

No problems expected.