

# BACLOFEN

**Brand names** Lioresal, Lyflex

**Used in the following combined preparations** None

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Baclofen is a muscle-relaxant drug that acts on the central nervous system, including the spinal cord. The drug relieves the spasms, cramping, and muscle rigidity (commonly known as spasticity) caused by a variety of disorders, including multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, brain injury, cerebral palsy, or stroke. Although this drug does not cure any of these disorders, it

increases mobility, allowing other treatment, such as physiotherapy, to be carried out.

Baclofen is less likely to cause muscle weakness than similar drugs, and its side effects, such as dizziness or drowsiness, are usually temporary. Elderly people are more susceptible to side effects, especially during early stages of treatment.

## QUICK REFERENCE

**Drug group** Muscle relaxant drug (p.78)

**Overdose danger rating** Medium

**Dependence rating** Low

**Prescription needed** Yes

**Available as generic** Yes

## INFORMATION FOR USERS

**Your drug prescription is tailored for you. Do not alter dosage without checking with your doctor.**

### How taken/used



Tablets, liquid, injection (specialist use).

### Frequency and timing of doses

3 x daily with food or milk.

### Adult dosage range

15mg daily (starting dose). Daily dose may be increased by 15mg every 3 days as necessary. Maximum daily dose: 100mg.

### Onset of effect

Some benefits may appear after 1–3 hours, but full beneficial effects may not be felt for several weeks. A dose 1 hour before a specific task will improve mobility.

### Duration of action

Up to 8 hours.

**Diet advice**  
None.

### Storage

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

### Missed dose

Take as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 2 hours, take a single dose now and skip the next.

### Stopping the drug

Do not stop taking the drug without consulting your doctor who will supervise a gradual reduction in dosage. Abrupt cessation may cause hallucinations, confusion, anxiety, seizures, and worsening spasticity.

### Exceeding the dose

An occasional unintentional extra dose is unlikely to cause problems. Large overdoses may cause weakness, vomiting, and severe drowsiness. Notify your doctor.

## SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

### Be sure to tell your doctor if:

- You have long-term liver or kidney problems.
- You have difficulty in passing urine.
- You have had a peptic ulcer.
- You have had epileptic seizures or a stroke.
- You have diabetes.
- You are being treated for high blood pressure.
- You have porphyria.
- You have Parkinson's disease.
- You suffer with breathing problems.
- You are taking other medicines.



### Pregnancy

Safety in pregnancy not established. Discuss with your doctor.



### Breast-feeding

The drug passes into the breast milk, but at normal doses adverse effects are unlikely. Discuss with your doctor.



### Infants and children

Reduced dose necessary.



### Over 60

Increased likelihood of adverse effects at start of treatment. Reduced initial dose may therefore be necessary.



### Driving and hazardous work

Avoid such activities until you have learned how baclofen affects you because the drug can cause drowsiness, decreased alertness, and blurred vision.



### Alcohol

Avoid. Alcohol may increase the sedative effects of this drug.

### Surgery and general anaesthetics

Be sure to inform your doctor or dentist that you are taking baclofen before you have a general anaesthetic.

## POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The common adverse effects are related to the sedative effects of the drug. Such effects are

minimized by starting with a low dose that is gradually increased.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Dizziness	●		●			
Drowsiness	●		●			
Nausea	●		●			
Muscle fatigue/weakness	●		●			
Confusion	●			●		
Difficulty in passing urine		●	●			
Constipation/diarrhoea		●	●			
Headache		●	●			
Blurred vision		●		●		

## INTERACTIONS

### Antihypertensive and diuretic drugs

Baclofen may increase the blood-pressure-lowering effect of such drugs.

**Drugs for parkinsonism** Some drugs used for parkinsonism may cause confusion and hallucinations if taken with baclofen.

**Sedatives** All drugs with a sedative effect on the central nervous system may increase the sedative properties of baclofen.

**Tricyclic antidepressants** may increase the effects of baclofen, leading to muscle weakness.

## PROLONGED USE

No problems expected.