

Getting Started on Gen-Clozapine

A guide for patients and families

GenCAN Monitoring With Confidence

Gen-Clozapine Access Network

VIATRIS® Mental Health



What is Gen-Clozapine?

You have been prescribed Gen-Clozapine, a medication used to treat schizophrenia when you do not respond to other drugs for the same purpose or if you have experienced serious side effects with other medications. If you have any questions about schizophrenia or why you have been prescribed this medication, speak to your doctor.

Gen-Clozapine can only be taken if prescribed by your doctor. It is important to tell your doctor if you suffer from any serious medical conditions or health problems before you start Gen-Clozapine.





What can you expect from treatment with Gen-Clozapine?

The time that it takes to feel better is different for every person who takes Gen-Clozapine. That is why it is very important to continue taking your medication as your doctor prescribes.

You may find that Gen-Clozapine improves your positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia. If you have any questions about how Gen-Clozapine works or why this medicine has been prescribed to you, ask your doctor.

Following your doctor's prescription is important. Your doctor will increase your dose of Gen-Clozapine slowly. During this time, be sure to tell your doctor or case manager if you have any signs or symptoms of infection (i.e. tiredness, weakness, fever, sore throat or flu-like complaints) and or any other side effects (i.e. rapid heart rate, chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting). The most common side effects are drowsiness/ sedation, dizziness, hypersalivation (increase production of saliva), tachycardia, and constipation.

When starting Gen-Clozapine your health team will monitor you blood pressure, pulse, heart rate and temperature.

You also need to have regular blood tests during your treatment on Gen-Clozapine.

Why do you have to go for regular blood testing?

A rare (approximately 0.7% of cases) condition called "agranulocytosis" can occur when taking Gen-Clozapine. This is a condition which causes a low absolute neutrophil count, part of your white blood cell count, and makes it difficult to fight off infections. Early detection is important to prevent or reverse this condition. Because this condition is life-threatening it is important to have regular blood tests done.

While you are on Gen-Clozapine, a blood test is required every week for the first 26 weeks because the risk of a low absolute neutrophil count is highest during this time. After 26 weeks of treatment, your doctor may recommend that you go for a blood test every two weeks, then after 52 weeks, your doctor may then recommend that you go for a blood test every four weeks.

If your absolute neutrophil count becomes low, your doctor may tell you to go for blood tests more often. If your absolute neutrophil count becomes too low, your doctor may tell you to stop taking Gen-Clozapine.

REGULAR TESTING MUST BE DONE for as long as you are on Gen-Clozapine treatment.

How can you remember to get your blood tests done?

Here are a few suggestions to help you remember to have your blood test done:

- Go to the lab on the same day of the week as much as possible
- Go to the lab on the same day as your doctor's appointment to get everything done in one day
- Have a friend or family member remind you to go for blood tests
- Mark all of your blood test dates on a calendar
- Ask for a **GenCAN LabMinder** booklet

How does **GenCAN** help you?

GenCAN is a registry designed to help reduce your risk of developing agranulocytosis. The **GenCAN** program consists of nurses who inform your doctor, your pharmacist and other health team members of any problem blood test results. This double-checking of your absolute neutrophil count helps find any problems at an early stage when agranulocytosis is treatable and reversible.

Your pharmacist can only dispense you Gen-Clozapine if you have completed your blood tests as prescribed by your doctor. It is best to always go to the same lab and pharmacy as they are registered with **GenCAN** as a part of your monitoring team. However, if you wish to change your lab or pharmacy, talk with your case manager or doctor about it first so that these changes can be made for you without causing any interruptions in your care.

What will happen if you miss a dose of Gen-Clozapine?

If you remember within two hours of your missed dose, take the dose right away.

If you remember more than 2 hours after your missed dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose as usual. **Do NOT double dose.**

If you have forgotten to take your Gen-Clozapine for more than 48 hours, contact your doctor before your dose, as your dosage may have to be readjusted. Do NOT change your dose or stop it without talking to your doctor. Stopping it all of a sudden may make you ill. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist first about how to stop it safely.

REMEMBER, DO NOT STOP TAKING GEN-CLOZAPINE WITHOUT TELLING YOUR DOCTOR.



How can you remember to take Gen-Clozapine?

- Take Gen-Clozapine at the same time every day as prescribed.
- Use a pill container that separates your doses by the time of day.
- After taking each dose, mark it on a calendar to help you keep track of your next dose.
- Put a reminder on your mirror or refrigerator, or have a friend or family member remind you to take your medication.

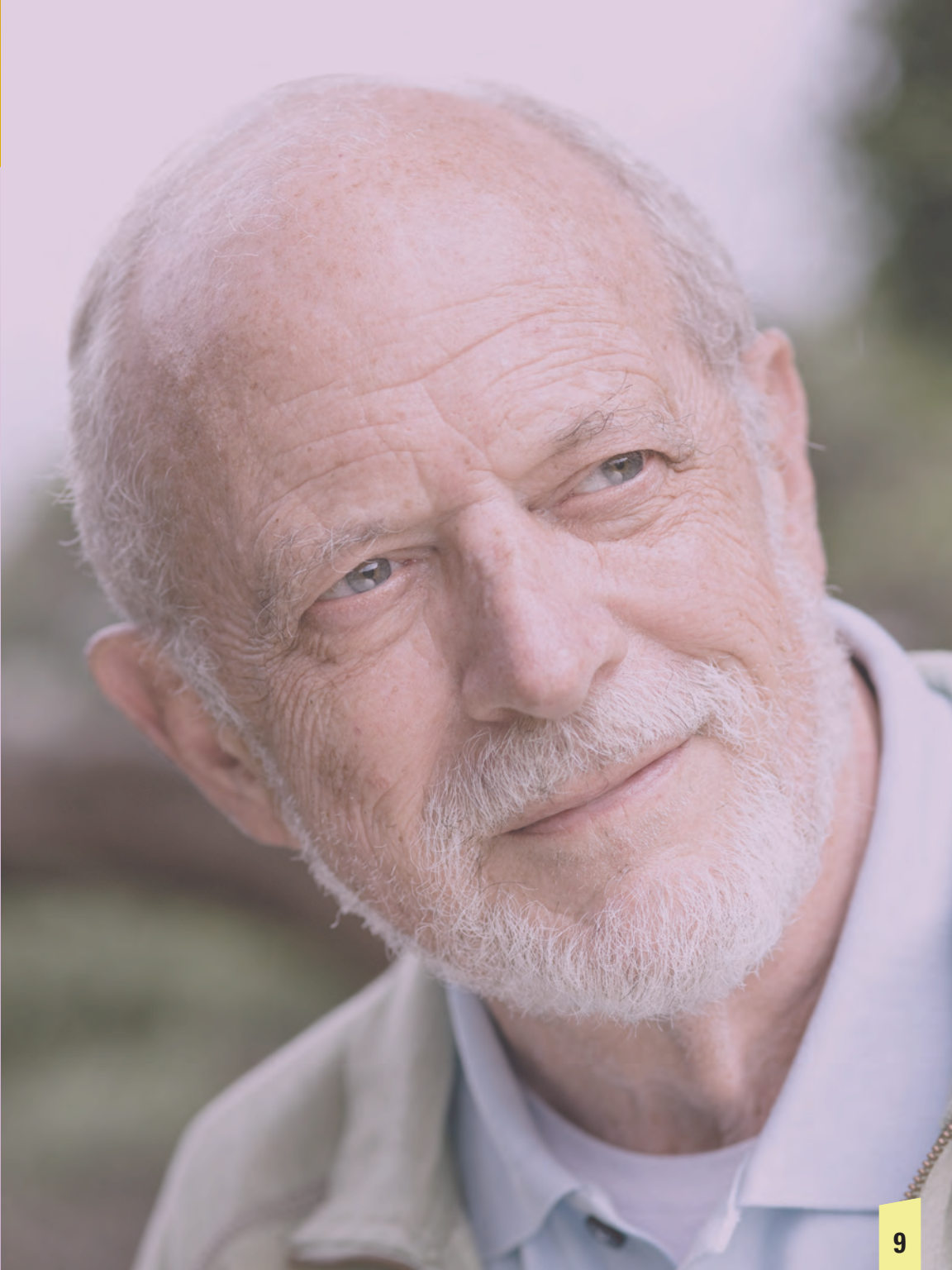
What will happen if you go on vacation or move?

Tell your doctor and pharmacy if you plan to move or go on vacation. They will contact **GenCAN** who will provide assistance with travel planning. You must continue your usual blood testing schedule while away on vacation.

What if you stop taking Gen-Clozapine?

If your doctor stops your treatment with Gen-Clozapine, you must continue your blood tests weekly until your absolute neutrophil count is within a normal level.

DO NOT STOP TAKING GEN-CLOZAPINE WITHOUT TELLING YOUR DOCTOR.



Are there any side effects of Gen-Clozapine?

The most common side effects are drowsiness/sedation, dizziness, hypersalivation, tachycardia (a rapid heartbeat), and constipation.

Other possible side effects include weight gain, urinary retention (less frequent urination), diarrhea, headache, dry mouth, visual disturbances, fever, confusion, lightheadedness or fainting, falls and fractures, stuffy nose, trouble swallowing, sweating, heartburn, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, nighttime bedwetting, abnormal ejaculation (dry orgasm), stuttering or slurred speech, obsessive thoughts and behaviours, having trouble reading, uncontrolled bending of the body to one side, muscle weakness, stiffness or pain, joint pain, swelling of the cheeks, rash on the body or face, itchy skin, patches of skin discoloration, tremor, repetitive and ritualized behaviour (obsessive-compulsive symptoms), increase or decrease in blood pressure, changes in skin, and restlessness.

Tell your doctor if you have constipation, or if your constipation becomes severe (gets worse). Your doctor may prescribe you laxatives if required.

Gen-Clozapine may lower your blood pressure, especially at the start of treatment. This may result in light-headedness or fainting.

If any of these affects you severely, **tell your doctor**.

If you notice any other side effects not mentioned in this leaflet, please inform your doctor or pharmacist.

A few suggestions

- **Drowsiness** – If you are feeling drowsy, do not drive or operate any machinery.
- **Dizziness** –To lessen dizziness, move slowly from a lying or sitting position. Sit on the side of the bed first before standing, lie down if the dizziness continues.
- **Excessive salivation or drooling** – Some people find it helpful to chew sugar free gum or at night, cover their pillow with a towel. Talk to your doctor about other ways to deal with this.
- **Constipation** – Eating fruits, vegetables and bran can be helpful, as well as drinking water and exercising. Talk to your doctor if this problem gets worse or if you go more than 3 days without having a bowel movement.
- **Weight gain** – As much as possible, try to eat healthy food and avoid junk food. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for suggestions. Exercise may help. Your doctor may check your weight, cholesterol (a type of body fat) and sugar levels from time to time.
- **Rapid heart rate** –Tell your doctor if this occurs.
- **Dry eyes/blurred vision** – Discuss this with your doctor. If dry eyes are bothersome, your doctor or pharmacist may suggest eye drops.

What are the serious warnings and precautions associated with Gen-Clozapine?

Severe Neutropenia (Agranulocytosis)

Gen-Clozapine treatment has caused severe neutropenia, defined as an absolute neutrophil count (ANC) less than 0.5 x 10^9/L. Severe neutropenia can lead to serious infection and death. Prior to initiating treatment with Gen-Clozapine a baseline ANC must be at least ≥ 2.0 x 10^9/L for the general population; and must be at least ≥ 1.0 x 10^9/L for patients with documented Benign Ethnic Neutropenia (BEN). Regular hematologic monitoring is required prior to dispensing, because of the significant risk of this potentially life-threatening adverse event. Advise patients to immediately report the appearance of lethargy, weakness, fever, sore throat, flu-like complaints or any other signs of infection.

Because of the risk of severe neutropenia, Gen-Clozapine is available only through a distribution system ("**GenCAN™**") that ensures weekly, every-two-week or every-four-week hematological testing prior to the dispensing of the next period's supply of Gen-Clozapine.

Myocarditis, Cardiomyopathy and Mitral Valve Incompetence

Fatal myocarditis and cardiomyopathy have occurred with the use of Gen-Clozapine. Discontinue Gen-Clozapine and obtain a cardiac evaluation upon suspicion of myocarditis or cardiomyopathy. Consider the possibility of myocarditis or cardiomyopathy if chest pain, tachycardia, palpitations, dyspnea, fever, flu-like symptoms, hypotension, or ECG changes occur. Generally, patients with a history of clozapine-associated myocarditis or cardiomyopathy should not be rechallenged with Gen-Clozapine.

In patients who are diagnosed with cardiomyopathy while taking Gen-Clozapine mitral valve incompetence has been reported. These cases reported either mild or moderate mitral regurgitation on two-dimensional echocardiography. In patients with suspected cardiomyopathy, consider a 2D-echo Doppler examination to identify mitral valve incompetence.

Increased Mortality in Elderly Patients with Dementia

Elderly patients with dementia treated with antipsychotic drugs are at an increased risk of death compared to those treated with placebo. Gen-Clozapine is not approved for use in elderly patients with dementia.

What is important to tell your doctor?

BEFORE you use Gen-Clozapine, be sure to tell your doctor or pharmacist if you:

Suffer from enlargement of the prostate; have a history of seizures (e.g. epilepsy); have glaucoma (an eye condition); suffer from diabetes; have a history of bone marrow disorder; have a paralytic ileus or other serious gastrointestinal problems; suffer from constipation; have or have had heart problems; have heart disease or family history of abnormal conduction in the heart called prolongation of the QT interval; have had a stroke; have or have had lung disease; have Alzheimer's disease; suffer from a condition called dementia; are pregnant or planning to become pregnant; are breastfeeding.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist what your coffee intake is and if you smoke. Abrupt changes in your habits may change the effect of Gen-Clozapine.

In addition, you should consult your doctor immediately at the first signs of a cold, flu-like symptoms, fever, sore throat, or any other signs of infection, as well as weakness or a general feeling of unwellness. The doctor may check your blood cell count and take further measures if necessary.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist in all cases if you experience: low blood pressure (weakness, dizziness, fainting); signs of infection such as fever, severe chills, sore throat or mouth ulcers (sign of reduced number of white cells in your blood, leading to a higher sensitivity to infection); signs of respiratory tract infection or pneumonia such as fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or wheezing; excessive thirst, dry mouth and passing large amounts of urine. These may be signs of high sugar levels in the blood (diabetes); fast and irregular heart beat that persists when you are at rest, possibly accompanied by shortness of breath and swelling of the feet or legs.

Stop taking the drug and call your doctor or pharmacist if you experience: sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arms or legs and speech or vision problems; rigid/stiff muscles, high fever, rapid or irregular heartbeat, sweating, state of confusion or reduced consciousness; seizures (i.e., loss of consciousness with uncontrollable shaking); chest pain, difficulty breathing or other respiratory symptoms; allergic reaction (symptoms include swelling of the lips, tongue, face and throat, difficulty in breathing); long lasting (more than 4 hours of duration) and painful erection of the penis.

Other important things to remember about Gen-Clozapine

Some important things to remember are:

- It is recommended to avoid excessive alcohol intake during treatment with Gen-Clozapine as it may increase drowsiness or dizziness.
- The possible risk of convulsion exists, so you may want to talk with your doctor before engaging in activities such as driving, operating machinery, swimming, climbing, etc.
- Tell your doctor if you think you are pregnant or are thinking of becoming pregnant or if you are breastfeeding.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist what your coffee intake is and if you smoke. Abrupt changes in your habits may change the effect of Gen-Clozapine.
- Like all medications, Gen-Clozapine should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist before taking any other medications, including the medications you can buy without a doctor's prescription (cold and allergy remedies, antacids, herbal remedies, etc). Always tell your doctor and pharmacist that you are taking Gen-Clozapine.
- Follow your doctor's dosage instructions exactly.

NEVER TAKE MORE OR LESS THAN THE PRESCRIBED DOSE.

If you think the dose is too weak or too strong, talk to your doctor.

Who can you call if you have questions or concerns?

Your treatment team, including your physician, pharmacist and nurse are always available to assist you. Call them if you have any questions or concerns.

KEEP LIST OF IMPORTANT NUMBERS IN CASE YOU NEED TO CONTACT EITHER ONE OF THEM.

Name	Telephone No.

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This booklet is a guide to help you understand the medication you are taking and does not replace your talks with your doctor. Always ask your doctor if you have any questions.

GEN-CLOZAPINE
25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg, 200 mg tablets

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