PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET
Period Delay Tablets

Your Pharmacist can supply you with tablets (norethisterone 5mg) to delay the start of a period for up to 16 days. You will need to complete a short form before norethisterone can be supplied.

How it works

Tablets (norethisterone 5mg) are taken three timed delay started 4 to 5 days before a period starts and continued for as long as needed (maximum of 16 days). A period bleed will normally start a few days after stopping norethisterone.

The balance of hormones changes during the time norethisterone tablets are being taken (womb lining) will be delayed.

Women who currently take a contraceptive pill are not eligible to use norethisterone to delay their periods. Information about delaying periods whilst taking contraceptive pills can be found on the NHS Choices web site (link below).

Norethisterone is not a contraceptive and will not prevent pregnancy.

Length or treatment

Your Pharmacist can supply sufficient norethisterone tablets to delay a period for up to 16 days, a maximum of 60 tablets. If period delay of less than 16 days is required, norethisterone is taken for fewer days and fewer tablets are needed.

Norethisterone is routinely prescribed to women who wish to delay their periods; however it is only for occasional use. Your Pharmacist is permitted to provide only one supply every six months. If more frequent treatment to delay periods is required or period delay of more than 16 days is needed, a doctor should be consulted.

You MUST read the manufacturer’s ‘patient information leaflet’ supplied with your tablets.

CAUTIONS

Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines norethisterone can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them. The most commonly reported side effects are bloating, breast tenderness, and loss of libido or stomach pains. Side effects are more likely to occur if norethisterone is taken long term, rather than in the short course of a week or two taken to delay periods.

Some women taking norethisterone experience some fluid retention (headache, epilepsy, blood pressure and bone density changes), some women experience breast tenderness, some women have been known to have mood changes (depression, anxiety).

For more information about side effects see the manufacturer’s ‘patient information leaflet’ supplied with norethisterone tablets.

Reasons for stopping norethisterone treatment immediately

Very rarely, norethisterone may cause a severe allergic reaction which can be life-threatening in some cases. You can get some or all of the following symptoms:

• wheezing
• difficulty breathing
• feeling faint
• swelling of the face or tongue
• swelling of the hands and feet
• intense itchy skin rash

Risk of Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)

All women have a small chance of having a blood clot in the veins of the leg, in the lung or other part of the body. The chances of getting a clot are very slightly higher if you are taking a hormone medicine like norethisterone. You are more likely to get a clot whether or not you are taking norethisterone if you:

• are very overweight
• have had a blood clot in the veins or lungs before
• have relatives who have had blood clots
• are unable to move for long periods of time (for example after an operation)
• have a serious injury or have major surgery
• have a history of repeated miscarriage

Other medications

Norethisterone can be taken at the same time with most other prescription medications. Your Pharmacist will ask about medication you are taking currently before supplying norethisterone.

Further information

About Norethisterone (NHS Choices site)
www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Periods-heavy/Pages/MedicineOverview.aspx?condition=Delaying%20menstruation&medicine=Norethisterone

How to delay periods using contraceptive pills (NHS Choices site)
www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/830.aspx?CategoryID=60&SubCategoryID=179

Patient Survey

We would greatly value your feedback on this service. You could also win £100 in our prize draw!

Visit www.pharmacypgd.co.uk/survey or scan the QR code with a smartphone.