

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet.

UK:

You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme, website: www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk.

Ireland:

You can also report side effects directly via HPRA Pharmacovigilance. Website: www.hpra.ie.

Please also report to UCB Pharma Ltd at UCBCares:

+44(0) 1753 777100;

Email: UCBCares.UK@ucb.com (UK) or +353 1463 2371;

Email: UCBCares.IE@ucb.com (Ireland).

By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

Important risk minimisation information for Patients and Caregivers: Xyrem® (sodium oxybate) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Here are some questions you may have about taking Xyrem®. Be sure to speak with your healthcare professional about any other questions you may have, and review the Package Leaflet included with your medicine bottle.



Frequently Asked Questions for patients. v3.0 - GL-N-XR-NAR-2000005.
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Frequently asked questions

Narcolepsy

What are the primary symptoms of narcolepsy?

Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS) is present in all cases, but it is also a frequent symptom in many other medical and sleep disorders. Patients often experience EDS in one of three ways: a constant level of drowsiness, sustained episodes of extreme and unavoidable sleepiness, and brief moments of sleep called Micro Sleep and possible sleep attacks. For a person without Narcolepsy to feel this effect, she or he would have to stay awake for 48 hours without even a brief nap and then try to function normally.

Cataplexy is present in most cases and is exclusive to narcolepsy. These are episodes of bilateral, partial or total, loss of strength or tone to all or part of a person's muscles, starting from head & neck to the buckling of the knees. Cataplexy can be as subtle as a brief facial tic, or as dramatic as a full body collapse. Episodes are usually triggered by strong emotions such as humour, love, joy, surprise, anger, etc. These events can last a brief moment to a few minutes.

Disrupted Night-time Sleep is the inability to maintain sleep for more than a few hours at a time. While the arousals from sleep may be total (coming full awake with awareness and memory of being awake), they are often partial (without awareness or memory of awakening). This prevents restful, adequate, and satisfying sleep, as the sleep is always fragmented.

What are the other symptoms of narcolepsy?

Sleep Paralysis is the inability to speak or control any of the voluntary muscles of the body at the onset of sleep or waking up. This may also include the feeling of inability to breathe. This is always short lasting and has no after effect.

Hallucinations at onset of sleep or at onset of waking up. These vivid, realistic, and often frightening images are experienced at the onset of sleep or waking up from a dream, but the mind believes that the dreams are reality.

How common is narcolepsy?

Narcolepsy is a rare disease. The prevalence of narcolepsy rates between 12 and 54 patients per 100,000 inhabitants.

At what age do people get Narcolepsy?

Narcolepsy can appear at any age, with a large peak around 15 years and a smaller peak around 36 years of age. Narcolepsy is a lifelong neurological disorder affecting life-style.

What is the cause of narcolepsy?

Researchers have discovered that, in most cases of narcolepsy with cataplexy, it is caused by the lack of two chemicals in the brain, called hypocretins (orexins). These chemicals influence the sleep/wake cycle.

Can I be cured?

Currently no cure for narcolepsy exists, nor any way to replace the missing hypocretin. Treatment of narcolepsy is available and aims to relieve the severity and the frequency of the symptoms.



What is Xyrem®?

Xyrem® (sodium oxybate) oral solution is a medicine indicated to treat narcolepsy with cataplexy in paediatric (from 7 years old), adolescent and adult patients.

May I drink alcohol while I'm taking Xyrem®?

No, you must not drink alcohol while taking Xyrem®. Xyrem®'s effects can be increased and you may experience impaired breathing (respiratory depression) that can be fatal. You may also experience impaired thinking or confusion.

What are the serious side effects of Xyrem®?

Trouble breathing (respiratory depression)

Xyrem® can affect breathing. If you have any breathing or lung problems you should tell your doctor before taking Xyrem®. If you are overweight, you are also at increased risk of respiratory depression. You should not take alcohol as this can increase the risk of respiratory depression also. Respiratory depression can be serious and even fatal.

Depression and suicidal thoughts

If you feel depressed, have suicidal thoughts or become more aggressive whilst taking Xyrem®, talk to your doctor straight away. You should tell your doctor if you have suffered in the past from any of the following conditions: depressive illness, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, psychosis (a mental disorder that may involve hallucinations, incoherent speech, or disorganised and agitated behaviour) or bipolar disorders.

Reduced level of consciousness

Because Xyrem® acts directly on the brain it causes drowsiness and can impair your level of consciousness. This can lead to coma and can be fatal. It is important that you do not take alcohol whilst taking Xyrem®. You should not take any other drugs that cause drowsiness. You should also not drive or operate machinery for at least 6 hours after taking Xyrem®.

Seizures

Xyrem® can cause seizures. You should tell your doctor before you take Xyrem® if you have any history of seizures.

Can Xyrem® be abused? is it addictive?

The active ingredient of Xyrem® is gamma- hydroxybutyrate (GHB). GHB is a chemical which can be abused and misused. Your doctor will therefore ask you specifically if you have any history of drug abuse.

Abuse and misuse of Xyrem® is dangerous and can lead to fatal consequences and cause serious medical problems, including trouble breathing, seizures (convulsions), loss of consciousness, coma, and death; and could also lead to dependence, craving for the drug, and severe withdrawal symptoms (following illicit use at frequent repeated doses in excess of the therapeutic dose range).

These are not all the side effects of Xyrem®. Talk to your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

Will my dose change?

It could take time to identify the dose that works best for you, perhaps up to several weeks. During that time, your doctor may gradually increase or decrease your dose, based on your response to treatment.

During this time, inform your doctor about any significant body weight change, and, if you experience any breathing trouble, or if you feel depressed. Never adjust or change your Xyrem® dose without consulting your doctor!

Why do I have to be in bed, ready to sleep, before taking Xyrem®?

Xyrem® rapidly induces sleep; therefore, as a safety precaution, it is best to be in bed as its effects begin to take place.

Why do I need to take a second dose at night?

The active ingredient in Xyrem® is short acting and the beneficial effects of a single dose of Xyrem® will not last for the entire night. Therefore, it is required that you take a second dose of Xyrem® 2.5 to 4 hours after the first dose, for the desired therapeutic effect.

What do I do if I forget to take Xyrem®?

If you forget to take the first dose before going to bed, take it as soon as you remember that night and then continue as before (take your second dose after the same interval as usual 2.5 to 4 hrs). However, do not take the second dose if you have to get up less than about 7 hours after the first one. If you miss the second dose, skip that dose and do not take Xyrem® again until the next night. Do not take a double dose to make up for any individual doses you have forgotten.

What do I do if I take accidentally more than the prescribed dose?

Taking too much Xyrem® may cause symptoms such as agitation, confusion, impaired movement, impaired breathing, blurred vision, profuse sweating, headache, vomiting and decreased consciousness leading to coma and seizures.

If you take more Xyrem® than you were told to take, or take it by accident, get emergency medical help right away.

Taking the labelled medicine bottle with you, even if it is empty, will help medical staff to manage your symptoms.

Is Xyrem® safe to use with other medications?

As with all medications, it is very important to tell your doctor about any other medications you are taking, including medicines you get without a prescription. Xyrem® should not be used in combination with medications that cause drowsiness, or with drugs like narcotic analgesics that can cause central nervous system depression. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following types of medicines: antidepressants, sodium valporate, topiramate, phenytoin, ethosuximide or medicines that increase central nervous system activity.

Ask your healthcare professional for the Xyrem® Patient Alert Card to keep with you to remind you about the use of Xyrem®. Show this card to all your doctors, so they know you are taking Xyrem®, especially if they prescribe other medications for you.

Can I use Xyrem® if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

There are no adequate data on the use of Xyrem® during pregnancy. Xyrem® is therefore not recommended during pregnancy. Xyrem® is excreted into breast milk, so you should not breastfeed when on Xyrem®. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

May I take Xyrem® with food?

Food will decrease the amount of Xyrem® that your body absorbs, and will significantly slow its absorption, so you should wait several hours after eating to take your first dose. It is also best to eat your evening meal at a regular time 2 to 3 hours prior to taking the first nightly Xyrem® dose to ensure consistent effects from the medication.

What if I stop taking Xyrem® abruptly?

If you suddenly stop taking Xyrem®, you may experience withdrawal symptoms.

You may find that cataplexy attacks return and, in rare cases, you may experience insomnia, headache, anxiety, dizziness, sleeping problems, sleepiness, hallucinations and abnormal thinking.

These simple requirements should ensure the safe and responsible use of Xyrem®.

- Do not share your Xyrem® with anyone.
- Use only the dose your doctor prescribed. If you believe the dose needs to be changed, contact your doctor.
- Don't take Xyrem® if you are less than 7 years old.
- Always respect a 2-hour interval between the last meal and the intake of Xyrem®.
- Always keep Xyrem® and its syringe, in its original package, in a safe location.
- Keep Xyrem® out of the reach of children.
- Return any unused product to your pharmacy.
- If you experience any unusual symptoms, like strange thoughts, including thoughts of hurting others, whilst taking Xyrem®, inform your doctor straight away.

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