

# LEVOTHYROXINE (THYROXINE)

**Other names:** Eltroxin®, Synthroid®, Levothyroxine (Mercury Pharma)



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medicine?

Levothyroxine is used to treat hypothyroidism (when the body does not produce enough thyroid hormone). By replacing the body's natural hormone, hypothyroid symptoms can be prevented such as:

- weakness, tiredness, fatigue
- cold intolerance
- slowness
- memory loss
- thin brittle nails
- dry thin skin and lifeless hair
- hoarseness
- weight gain (without eating more food)
- loss of taste/smell

## When to take this medicine

- Levothyroxine is usually taken on an empty stomach, one hour before food or two hours after or as directed by your doctor or pharmacist
- Levothyroxine should not be crushed or chewed or halved
- It should be taken regularly, usually once a day before breakfast

**DO NOT STOP** taking levothyroxine without your doctor's permission.

When starting treatment or if there is a change in your levothyroxine brand, regular thyroid function tests (blood tests) may be required to make sure that you are getting the correct dose.

You **should not change brands** of levothyroxine unless advised by your doctor or pharmacist.

## If you miss a dose

Take your dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- fast heartbeat
- chest pain
- muscular weakness or leg cramps
- itchy rash
- swelling of legs or ankles

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- headache
- difficulty sleeping
- flushing of the face
- sweating, heat intolerance
- gastrointestinal (stomach) upsets such as nausea and/or vomiting
- loss of weight
- temporary loss of hair
- restlessness, irritability, nervousness

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effects are of a concern to you.

## Other Medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Other medicines may interact with levothyroxine, for example:

- Antacids (e.g. Mylanta, Gaviscon), iron and calcium supplements can interfere with the absorption of levothyroxine. Take these medicines two hours before or after levothyroxine.
- Antiepileptic medicines (e.g. phenytoin, carbamazepine) can change the amount of levothyroxine in your blood, so when starting or changing doses of antiepileptic medicines, more monitoring of your thyroid function (blood) tests may be needed.
- When taking cholestyramine (Questran-Lite), it must be taken four hours before or after your levothyroxine.

## Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**