

THEOPHYLLINE

Other names: Nuelin®



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

Theophylline works by relaxing and opening the airways of the lungs. This allows air to flow more freely into the lungs and prevents shortness of breath. Also, theophylline can act on the diaphragm (muscles in the chest that helps with breathing), helping your breathing.

Theophylline can be used for the following conditions:

- to prevent asthma
- to help with lung function in COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

When to take this medicine

Theophylline should be taken regularly as your doctor directs. The dose times can vary depending on the preparation. For example, the syrup can be given every six hours while the SR (slow release) tablet is usually given twice a day.

Theophylline should be taken with food to prevent an upset stomach.

Theophylline slow release tablets should not be halved, crushed or chewed. They should be swallowed whole with a large glass of water.

DO not change your dose or stop taking theophylline without your doctor's permission. Stopping it may cause your condition to get worse.

If you miss a dose

Take as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the 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:

- palpitations, fast or irregular heart beat
- sleeplessness

- irritability
- nervousness
- shakiness, unusual movements
- skin rash
- fainting
- loss of appetite

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

- headache
- diarrhoea
- indigestion
- gastrointestinal (stomach) upsets such as nausea and/or vomiting, stomach pain

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice any other side effect(s) from your medicine that are not mentioned here.

Sometimes the side effects of theophylline are related to the dose you are taking. To help prevent these side effects and to make sure you are receiving the right amount of theophylline, a blood test may be taken.

Other Medication

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.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist as some medicines can interact with theophylline and include:

These medicines can increase the blood theophylline level in the body. This may require a decrease of your theophylline dose.

- Antibiotics (e.g. ciprofloxacin, erythromycin)
- Anti-epileptics (e.g. phenytoin, phenobarbitone, carbamazepine)
- Beta-blockers (e.g. propranolol)
- Calcium channel blockers (e.g. nifedipine, verapamil).

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- Combined oral contraceptives
- Rifampicin
- Cigarette smoking

Storage

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

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