

Patient Information Leaflet

Switching from quetiapine (Seroquel[®]) slow release (XL) tablets to quetiapine plain (IR) tablets

Why are you asking me to switch?

In March 2012 quetiapine plain tablets started to become much cheaper. This is currently not the case with the quetiapine XL tablets. The NHS is trying very hard not to waste money and switching preparations can be a safe and cost effective way to do this.

How much does quetiapine cost?

Currently both the plain and XL tablets can cost over £2,000 per year depending on the dose used. By the end of 2012 we expect the price of the IR tablets to drop to less than £200 per year. The cost of the XL tablets is also due to come down but not as competitive as the IR at the moment.

Why will the price of plain tablets become cheaper?

The Government allows the price of a new drug to be set at a relatively high price and for only one brand to be available. This is to reward the drug company for investing in research. This higher price allows further research to take place. After a set number of years this protection (patent) is removed and other companies are allowed to make and sell the same drug in the UK. This competition soon results in the price falling dramatically.

What is the difference between the plain and XL tablets?

Both types of tablet have the same active ingredient (quetiapine). This means switching is unlikely affect how well the tablet works. However, should you feel the new tablets are not working as well, please discuss it with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Will I have to change how I take my tablets?

Possibly. Plain tablets are usually taken twice daily, which means a change. However, the plain tablets can be taken once daily, like the XL tablet, if you or your doctor thinks it will help you. Some people prefer to just take their quetiapine once a day to help them remember to take it.

Will any of the side-effects I might experience change?

One of the side-effects some people experience taking quetiapine is feeling sleepy during the day. Plain quetiapine tablets, if taken once a day, may make you feel a little sleepier than your XL tablet did. However this is not necessarily a problem if the quetiapine is taken in the evening so you are in bed when it first gets into the body. If you are concerned about any new side-effects that last more than a few days, please contact your doctor to discuss them.

What if I am unhappy about changing to the plain tablets?

Please discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor or whoever prescribes your medication. If after further discussion you are still unhappy about swapping, then you can remain on the XL formulation. This will not affect how you are treated now or in the future.

If you would like impartial advice you can contact the AWP Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01249 468 261 or 01249 468 217 or 01249 468 091.

If you require this document in another format such as large print or audio or in another community language, please contact the Engagement Team 01249 468000