

## Uses

This medication is used to treat manic-depressive disorder (bipolar disorder). It works to stabilize the mood and reduce extremes in behavior by restoring the balance of certain natural substances (neurotransmitters) in the brain.

Some of the benefits of continued use of this medication include decreasing how often manic episodes occur and decreasing the symptoms of manic episodes such as exaggerated feelings of well-being, feelings that others wish to harm you, irritability, anxiousness, rapid/loud speech, and aggressive/hostile behaviors.

## Side Effects

See also Warning section.

Drowsiness, dizziness, tiredness, increased thirst, increased frequency of urination, weight gain, and mildly shaking hands (fine tremor) may occur. These should go away as your body adjusts to the medication. If any of these effects persist or worsen, tell your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because he or she has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects.

Tell your doctor right away if you have any serious side effects, including: diarrhea, vomiting, unsteady walk, confusion, slurred speech, blurred vision, severe hand trembling (coarse tremor), vision changes (such as growing blind spot, vision loss), joint swelling/pain, pain/discoloration of finger/toes, cold hands/feet.

## Precautions

Before taking lithium, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. This product may contain inactive ingredients, which can cause allergic reactions or other problems. Talk to your pharmacist for more details.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: heart disease, kidney disease, urinary problems (such as difficulty urinating), underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism), seizures, Parkinson's disease, leukemia, severe dehydration (severe loss of body water), any infection with high fever, a certain skin disorder (psoriasis).

Lithium treatment may rarely reveal an existing condition that affects the heart rhythm (Brugada syndrome). Brugada syndrome is an inherited, life-threatening heart problem that some people may have without knowing it. It can cause a serious (possibly fatal) abnormal heartbeat and other symptoms (such as severe dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath) that need medical attention right away. Brugada syndrome may cause death suddenly. Before starting lithium treatment, tell your doctor if you have any of the following risk factors: Brugada syndrome, unexplained fainting, family history of certain heart problems (Brugada syndrome, sudden unexplained death before 45 years old).

#### Interactions

Drug interactions may change how your medications work or increase your risk for serious side effects. This document does not contain all possible drug interactions. Keep a list of all the products you use (including prescription/nonprescription drugs and herbal products) and share it with your doctor and pharmacist. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicines without your doctor's approval.

Other medications can affect the removal of lithium from your body, which may affect how lithium works. Examples include ACE inhibitors (such as captopril, enalapril), ARBs (such as losartan, valsartan), NSAIDs (such as celecoxib, ibuprofen), "water pills" (diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide), other drugs for mental/mood conditions (such as chlorpromazine, haloperidol, thiothixene), among others. Your doctor may need to adjust your dose of lithium if you are on these medications.

The risk of serotonin syndrome/toxicity increases if you are also taking other drugs that increase serotonin. Some examples are street drugs such as MDMA/"ecstasy," St. John's wort, certain antidepressants (such as SSRIs like fluoxetine/paroxetine, SNRIs like duloxetine/venlafaxine), among others. The risk of serotonin syndrome/toxicity may be more