

### Varenicline

#### What is the medicine for?

Also known as Champix, varenicline is a non-nicotine therapy which has been especially designed to help people to stop smoking. It helps to relieve withdrawal and craving symptoms associated with giving up nicotine, but it also reduces the amount of satisfaction and pleasure derived from smoking cigarettes.

#### Am I suitable for varenicline?

Varenicline is suitable for people who are motivated to give up smoking but who have not yet been successful. If you are pregnant or allergic to any of the ingredients in the tablets you should not take it. If you are breast-feeding, you should ask the MyAction nurse or your doctor for advice before taking varenicline.

If you have a history of psychiatric illness, you should let your doctor know before he decides on whether or not you are suitable to take varenicline. If you cannot take varenicline, do not worry, there are other options available to you.

If you have kidney problems, your doctor may need to prescribe a lower dose of varenicline for you.

#### How do I take varenicline?

1. First, choose a quit date when you will stop smoking with the MyAction nurse.
2. Start taking varenicline one to two weeks before this date. You can keep smoking during this time. Make sure you try and stop smoking on your quit date. If you slip, try again. Some people need a few weeks for varenicline to work best.
3. Take varenicline after eating with a full glass of water (150 mls).
4. Most people will keep taking varenicline for up to 12 weeks.

*Please turn over.*

### Are there any special instructions about how I should take the medicine?

Varenicline comes as a white tablet (0.5 mg) and a blue tablet (1 mg). You should start with the white tablet and then go to the blue tablet. See the chart below for instructions about the dose.

Day 1 to Day 3	<input type="radio"/>	White tablet (0.5 mg), 1 tablet each day
Day 4 to 7	<input type="radio"/>	White tablet (0.5 mg), twice a day 1 in the morning and 1 in the evening
Day 8 to end of treatment	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Blue tablet (1 mg) twice a day 1 in the morning and 1 in the evening

### Are there any side effects?

The most common side effects of varenicline include nausea, sleep disturbance (trouble sleeping, abnormal dreams), constipation, gas and vomiting. Tell the MyAction nurse or your doctor about the side effects that do not go away. They should last for no more than two to three weeks. Building the dose up slowly helps a lot to avoid the side effects. If side effects do not go away and your normal day to day activities are disrupted, the MyAction nurse or your doctor may recommend taking a lower dose. You may also be prescribed a medicine to stop the nausea.

*If you have any disturbing thoughts or feel depressed while you are trying to stop smoking, with or without varenicline, you should tell the MyAction nurse or your doctor immediately.*

### What other important information do I need to know?

Varenicline may make you dizzy and or sleepy when you first start taking it. You should not drive, operate complex machinery or engage in any other potentially hazardous activities until you know whether you are going to experience dizziness or sleepiness.

### What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

It is important that you take varenicline regularly at the same time each day. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it almost time for the next dose, do not take the tablet that you missed. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten tablet.

### Can I take other medicines?

You should tell the MyAction nurse about any other medications you are taking. Stopping smoking with or without varenicline may affect the way other medications work, especially insulin, asthma medications and blood thinners, so an adjustment of the dose of your medications may be necessary.

### Can I drink alcohol while I'm taking this medicine?

Yes, but stick to the limits recommended by your doctor. If you have a history of alcohol dependence you may not be suitable for varenicline.

*Follow the instructions on the pharmacy label carefully, and read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.*

*If you would like more information or if you have any questions about your medicines, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or the MyAction nurse. Don't be afraid to ask any questions.*