

Pediatric Neurology Services

Tegretol®

Pronunciation: TEG-re-tol

Generic term: carbamazepine

Pronunciation: car-ba-MAZE-a-peen

Manufacturer: Novartis Pharmaceuticals

Description

Tegretol is used in treatment of all types of seizures that start in one part of the brain (partial seizures) and in the treatment of generalized tonic clonic (grand mal; whole body shaking) seizures. It is usually described as a “first line treatment,” meaning it is often the first medicine doctors try for these kinds of seizures.

Laboratory studies

If your child is on Tegretol, he or she will need to have blood work done periodically to monitor carbamazepine level, complete blood cell count, platelet count and liver function. Your child’s doctor will determine and discuss with you how frequently these tests need to be done. Often these tests can be done close to home, and the results faxed to your child’s Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh doctor (fax number: 412-692-6787).

Possible side effects

- Drowsiness.
- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Blurred vision.
- Double vision.
- Difficulty in thinking.
- Diarrhea.
- Nausea.

continued

- Vomiting.
- Allergic skin rashes.
- Bone marrow suppression (inability of the bone marrow to make enough blood cells) and liver damage.

Precautions and drug interactions

- Tegretol is processed by the body in the liver and interacts with several other epilepsy drugs and other medications, such as warfarin, theophylline and doxycycline. It may reduce the effectiveness of other antiepileptic (anti-seizure) drugs which are also processed through the liver, and with the effectiveness of birth control pills at standard doses.
- If your daughter is pregnant or planning to become pregnant, notify her Children's neurology doctor immediately. Consult her doctor before she begins breast-feeding her infant. There is an increased risk of spina bifida (an abnormality of closure of the spine) in children of women taking this medication while pregnant.

How the medication is to be given

- Tegretol is available in 100 mg and 200 mg chewable tablets, 200 mg swallowable tablets and a long-acting form called TegretolXR (see TegretolXR information sheet, available at Children's Neurology Clinic).
- Always store your child's Tegretol in a cool (not cold), dry place and do not refrigerate. Storage in hot, humid surroundings may reduce the amount of the active ingredient in Tegretol and prevent it from having its desired effect.
- Notify your child's doctor that you need a new prescription for your child right after you pick up your last refill from the pharmacy.

