



# Pyrazinamide (PZA)

## A patient's guide to taking medicine for TB

### What is Pyrazinamide?

Pyrazinamide (PZA) is an antibiotic medicine used to treat tuberculosis (TB). There are two ways it is used:

1. To treat TB infection.
2. To cure TB disease (when taken with other medicines).

The TB germs are very strong and hard to kill. You will need to take this medicine for two or more months in order to kill the bacteria. Your doctor will decide exactly how many months you will take the medicine.

### How do I take this medicine?

- It is very important that you take the medicine every day or as instructed by your doctor.
- Tell your doctor right away if you stop taking your medicine.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible, but never take two doses at one time.
- Try to take the medicine on an empty stomach. If it upsets your stomach, take it with food.
- Remember to tell your doctor about other medicines you are taking or any new medicines you start taking.
- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, talk to your doctor before taking this medicine.
- Store PZA in a cool, dry place.

**DO NOT** drink alcohol while taking this medicine. You could damage your liver.

Most people take this medicine for the first two months of treatment only. During this time it may need to be taken one, two, or three times per day, depending on what the doctor prescribes.

### What are some of the side effects I should watch out for?

- Most people have no problems while taking PZA.
- You will need to be monitored regularly by your doctor while taking PZA.
- Some common side effects are:
  - ◊ Upset stomach/loss of appetite
  - ◊ Swollen or painful joints
  - ◊ Skin rash
  - ◊ More sensitive to the sun
- If you have any of the following more serious side effects, stop taking the medicine and call your doctor.
  - ◊ Fatigue/feeling very tired
  - ◊ Nausea/vomiting
  - ◊ Stomach cramps
  - ◊ Loss of appetite
  - ◊ Yellowish skin or eyes
  - ◊ Very dark urine
  - ◊ Fever for three days or more

### Tips for taking TB medicines:

- Take your medicine at the same time every day, for example:
  - ◊ Before going to bed
  - ◊ First thing in the morning
- Use a weekly pill container
- Mark off each day on your calendar after you take your pills
- Ask a family member or friend to remind you
- Consider Directly Observed Therapy (DOT)

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