

**Patient Information**

**Nephrology Department**

**Calcium acetate tablets (Phosex®)**

**Contact Information**

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(Available Monday – Friday 8:30am until 2pm)

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**What are calcium acetate tablets and what they do?**

Calcium acetate (Phosex®) tablets are a medication known as a phosphate binder.

Normally the kidneys control the level of substances in the blood. However when kidney function deteriorates phosphates can build up in the blood. When this happens phosphate combines with calcium in the blood causing damage when it is deposited in the blood vessel walls. It can also affect the strength of bones and joints and cause itchiness.

When controlling the level of phosphate in your blood it is important to follow the advice you will be given on adjusting the amount of phosphate in your diet. Phosphate binders are often prescribed in addition to making changes to the diet.

Calcium acetate prevents phosphate being absorbed into the bloodstream as it binds to the phosphate in the food you eat. The excess phosphate is then passed out in your stools.

**Why have I been prescribed calcium acetate?**

Your doctor has prescribed calcium acetate for you to take, this is because the level of phosphate in your blood is high. Taking calcium acetate tablets as well as reducing the amount of phosphate in your diet will help to reduce the levels of phosphate in your blood.

**How should I take my calcium acetate tablets?**

Phosphate binders only work if they are taken with foods that contain phosphate. Calcium acetate is best taken at the beginning of a meal and should be swallowed whole with water. This medication should be taken with your meals and may also need to be taken with snacks. Your doctor, dietician or specialist nurse will advise you how many tablets to take and when.

**Do I need to be monitored or have tests because I am taking calcium acetate?**

Your blood levels of phosphate will be monitored regularly when you attend the renal clinic. From these results your doctor will adjust your dose of calcium acetate as required.

**Does calcium acetate have any side effects?**

As with all medications calcium acetate can cause side effects. The most common side effects of calcium acetate are constipation or diarrhoea and sickness. The side effects are usually mild however if you are concerned or feel that you have any other side effects associated with calcium acetate please contact your doctor or specialist nurse for advice.

**Does calcium acetate interact with any other medications?**

Phosphate binders should not be taken at the same time as iron tablets or some antibiotics as it can cause them to be ineffective. Phosphate binders should be taken with a meal and iron tablets one hour after. If you are prescribed antibiotics these should be taken at least two hours before or after your phosphate binder.

You should only take tablets which are prescribed for you by your doctor and check with your pharmacist before taking any new or over-the-counter medications.

**Further information**

Further information about your medication can be found in the patient information leaflet found in the tablet box or on the container.