

**Patient Information**

**Nephrology Department**

**Paricalcitol capsules (Zemplar®)**

**Contact Information**

Emma Head, Renal Advanced Nurse Practitioner
01553 613076

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

V1: 08/2017 EH/SSG/SPU

**What is paricalcitol and what does it do?**

Paricalcitol is from a group of medicines called vitamin D analogues. Paricalcitol is used to control the levels of calcium and phosphate in the body. It is used when there is a disturbance in the body’s calcium levels. In kidney disorders they are used to manage changes to the bones.

Paricalcitol is a form of vitamin D which is used to increase the levels of calcium in the blood to normal. It is required because your kidneys can no longer produce vitamin D by themselves.

You may also be prescribed a phosphate binder to take alongside the paricalcitol. This is to ensure that the levels of phosphate and calcium in your blood are well controlled.

**Why have I been prescribed paricalcitol?**

When the kidneys can no longer control vitamin D there is an effect on the parathyroid hormone (PTH) and calcium levels in the body. Paricalcitol is used to help your PTH and calcium levels normal, preventing long-term complications such as renal bone disease.

It is likely that you have previously been prescribed alfacalcidol, a similar drug to paricalcitol, however your doctor has decided to use paricalcitol instead to control your calcium and PTH levels more effectively.

**How should I take paricalcitol?**

Paricalcitol is taken 3 times per week. You can check with your doctor pharmacist or specialist nurse to ensure you know how often you should be taking your paricalcitol. The label on the box should also tell you this information.

**Do I need to be monitored or have any tests because I am taking paricalcitol?**

Your renal doctor will monitor the levels of calcium and parathyroid hormone(PTH) in your blood regularly, adjusting your dose of paricalcitol depending on results.

**Does paricalcitol have any side effects?**

Paricalcitol is similar to a natural form of a vitamin and does not have unexpected side effects. Whilst taking paricalcitol it is important to ensure that the calcium levels in the blood do not become too high (hypercalcaemia). In order to ensure this does not happen your renal doctor will regularly check your calcium levels.

If you believe that you are experiencing or have experienced side effects related to paricalcitol capsules, please contact your doctor or specialist nurse for advice.

**Does paricalcitol interact with other medications?**

Some medications which are used for the treatment of epilepsy (phenobarbitone, phenytoin, carbamazepine) reduce vitamin D levels in the body. Your doctor will adjust your paracalcitol dose accordingly if you are taking these medications.

You should avoid vitamin supplements that contain vitamin D, this includes multivitamin tablets and fish oil preparations (including cod liver oil).

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.