

# Clozapine (Clozaril®)

## ALAMEDA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Client's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Medication Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

**What does this medication help to treat?**

Schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder or other conditions.

**Symptoms of these conditions are:**

- Hallucinations (hearing voices)
- Delusions (beliefs that are false)
- Fearful feelings
- Paranoia or suspiciousness
- Agitation, aggression, or hostility
- Lack of energy or motivation

- Poor concentration
- Rapid thoughts
- Pacing and restlessness
- Fluctuations in mood
- Insomnia

Clozapine is sometimes prescribed for other uses; ask your health care professional for more information.

**Other information**

- This medication can take up to 12 weeks to achieve desired results but you should begin to see improvement within the first two weeks of treatment.
- It is very important to keep all appointments with your clinic, prescriber, and laboratory.
- Your blood will have to be monitored weekly for the first 6 months of therapy with clozapine.

### Side Effects and Management

#### Common (greater than 10 in 100 clients on this medication)

Drowsiness	Use caution when driving or operating machinery. Ask your prescriber about taking your dose at bedtime if drowsiness occurs.
Dizziness	Arise slowly from chairs. Dangle feet off the side of the bed before getting up.
Nausea, Vomiting or Upset Stomach	Try taking your clozapine with food, if vomiting continues, call your prescriber.
Headache	You may take aspirin or Tylenol to relieve your headache. The headache side effect of this medication should subside over time. Talk to your prescriber if headaches are severe or persist for more than one day.
Blurred vision	Talk to your prescriber about this side effect. The dose of your medication may need to be lowered.
Increased appetite, Weight gain	Avoid foods high in fat and sugar. Eat balanced meals and maintain an active lifestyle. Individuals may gain 10-15 pounds over 1-2 months.
Constipation	Drink plenty of water and increase fiber in your diet. Consult your prescriber about other treatment.
Rapid heartbeat	Treatment is available; if you experience a rapid heartbeat, consult your prescriber.
Increased watering of the mouth	This may occur in the nighttime hours. Treatment is available if you feel this is bothersome. Consult with your prescriber.

#### Uncommon (~1 to 10 in 100 clients on this medication)

Blood abnormality	Tell your prescriber if you start to have many infections, or you feel flu-like symptoms, this may be a rare side effect of clozapine in which your immune system may be lowered. To maintain safety, the white blood cell count for all patients taking clozapine must be checked each week for the first six months and then every other week after that.
Seizures	Alert your prescriber immediately. You may be at greater risk if you are taking higher doses or if you take other drugs or substances that can cause seizures.
Increased sensitivity to the sun	Avoid unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight and wear protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
Muscle Side Effects, Restlessness	You may experience muscle stiffness, spasm, or restlessness. If this should happen, tell your prescriber so that your dose may be adjusted or a medication can be given to counteract these effects.

#### Rare (less than 1 in 100 clients on this medication)

Call your prescriber immediately if you experience any of these:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tremor</li> <li>▪ Fine worm-like tongue movements, unusual face, mouth, or jaw movements</li> <li>▪ Fast or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)</li> <li>▪ Slow or difficult speech</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seizures or convulsions</li> <li>▪ Shuffling walk</li> <li>▪ Blurred vision</li> <li>▪ Fever</li> <li>▪ Skin rash or yellowing of the skin or eyes</li> <li>▪ Difficulty swallowing or breathing</li> <li>▪ Risk of stroke (in elderly individuals)</li> </ul> |
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\*\*References: Clinical Psychopharmacology, LexiComp 2011\*\*

**Note:** This information is not intended to cover all possible uses, precautions, interactions or adverse effects for this medication. If you have further questions about the medications you are taking check with your health care professional.