



Patient Information

Sinemet for Restless Legs Syndrome or Periodic Limb Movements of Sleep

Sinemet (carbidopa/levodopa) dose sizes:

1. Sinemet 25/100
2. Sinemet CR 25/100
3. Sinemet CR 50/200

For Restless Legs: Start with $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet about 30 minutes before bedtime. Increase dose by $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet every three days until restless legs symptoms are under control (i.e. $\frac{1}{2}$ tab \rightarrow 1 tab \rightarrow 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tabs \rightarrow 2 tabs \rightarrow 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tabs \rightarrow 3 tabs). Do not exceed 3 tablets per dose.

If Sinemet is effective initially but you awaken during the night with restless legs symptoms, you can either take a second dose during the night (it will take about 30 minutes to take effect) or you can switch to Sinemet CR. You may break the CR tablets in half but do not crush them as this disrupts the slow release coating. You may have to increase the total dose of Sinemet when you switch from regular to CR. You may need to take the CR tablet 1-2 hours before bedtime. You can also combine regular Sinemet and CR (e.g. You can take one regular tablet plus one CR tablet about 30 minutes before bedtime).

For Periodic Limb Movements of Sleep: Start with Sinemet CR 25/100. Take $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet about 30 minutes before bedtime. Increase the dose by $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet every three days until symptoms disappear (i.e. $\frac{1}{2}$ tab \rightarrow 1 tab \rightarrow 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tabs \rightarrow 2 tabs \rightarrow 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tabs \rightarrow 3 tabs).

Side effects: Nausea occurs in about 10% of patients. If nausea occurs, try splitting the total dose. Take $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total dose two hours before bed and $\frac{1}{2}$ at bedtime. Nausea can also be reduced by taking Sinemet with food. However, foods high in protein will interfere with absorption of Sinemet. If you do take it with food, try a low-protein snack such as crackers and fruit juice. Do not take Sinemet with milk which is high in protein. Nausea is often a transient problem – it may disappear after a few weeks.

Increased dreaming may occur. There is no need to worry about this unless the dreams are disturbing. Rarely, patients may experience low blood pressure, manifested by lightheadedness or fainting. If this occurs, stop Sinemet and contact your doctor.

Augmentation: The most common side effect with Sinemet is augmentation of restless legs symptoms. Augmentation refers to a worsening of symptoms during the day. In other words, patients who take Sinemet at bedtime or in the evening may find that restless legs symptoms begin bothering them earlier in the day than before they started taking Sinemet. If augmentation occurs, you can either take a dose of Sinemet (usually $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 tablet of Sinemet 25/100) to relieve the symptoms, or switch to another medication.

Tolerance: Sinemet may be effective initially but stop working after some length of time. Tolerance develops in an estimated 10-20% of patients and may occur after a few days or take many months to develop. If you develop tolerance to Sinemet, you can either increase the dose or switch to another medication. Sensitivity to Sinemet will sometimes return if one withdraws from this medication and stays off for several months.

Interactions: There are not many drug interactions to worry about with Sinemet. Sinemet should not be taken at the same time as a MAO inhibitor, a type of antidepressant. MAO inhibitors are used much less frequently than other antidepressants, however. Although most antidepressants do not interact with Sinemet, they may make restless legs symptoms worse. Trazodone is an antidepressant which does not seem to worsen restless legs symptoms. High doses of Vitamin B-6 (Pyridoxine) may decrease the effectiveness of Sinemet. You should take no more Vitamin B-6 than is contained in a multivitamin tablet.

COPYRIGHT 1996 BY THE SLEEP DISORDERS CENTER OF CENTRAL TEXAS

THE SLEEP DISORDERS CENTER OF CENTRAL TEXAS
102 WESTLAKE DR, SUITE 102 ♦ AUSTIN, TEXAS 78746
(512)329-YAWN (329-9296) ♦ www.sleepdoctor.com