

Quinolones (fluoroquinolones):

Cipro (ciprofloxacin), Tequin (gatifloxacin), Levaquin (levofloxacin)

What are Quinolones? These antibiotics kill bacteria and clear up infection within the body.

What is it used for? In gastroenterology, Quinolones may be very helpful in controlling the bacterial infection associated with diverticulitis, Crohn's disease, and peritonitis. They can also be helpful in patients with confusion related to a failing liver.

How do I take it? Follow your physician's instructions carefully. Antibiotics work best when taken at the same time each day. Cipro is best to take 2 hours after a meal. Levaquin and Tequin may be taken with or without food. Keep liquid cold or at room temperature-below 86°. Shake well before using any liquid suspension form of the medicine. Keep all medications away from children. Never share your medications with anyone else.

What do I do for a missed dose? Quinolones works best when there is a steady blood level. Therefore, try not to miss any doses and take them at evenly spaced intervals. If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to your regular schedule. Do not take 2 doses at the same time.

Are there interactions with food or beverages? Quinolones should not be taken with dairy or calcium fortified juices. This drug may increase the effects of caffeine.

Are there interactions with other drugs? An interaction generally means that one drug may increase or decrease the effect of another drug. Also, the more medications a person takes, the more likely there will be a drug interaction. Interactions with this drug may occur with the following:

- Heart rhythm drugs: quinidine, procainamide, amiodarone, sotalol, and others
- Tricyclic antidepressants: amitriptyline (Elavil), imipramine (Tofranil), nortriptyline (Pamelor), doxepin (Sinequan), amoxapine (Asendin) and others
- Phenothiazines: Prolixin, Thorazine, Trilafon, Serentil, Mellaril
- theophylline (Theo-Dur)
- cyclosporine (Sandimmune, Neoral)
- phenytoin (Dilantin)
- blood thinners (Coumadin)
- probenecid
- Insulin and oral diabetes medicines (glyburide, Diabeta, Micronase, Glynase, glipizide, glucotrol)
- cimetidine (Tagamet)
- Erythromycin
- Digoxin
- NSAIDs: Ibuprofen, naproxen, ketoprofen and others
- Didanosine (DDI, Videx)

Is there a problem if I have another disorder or disease? Patients who have severe chronic kidney disease may need dosage adjustment. In addition, those patients who have had or are taking medicines for a prolongation of the QT interval, low potassium, seizures, a previous stroke, diabetes, or heart rhythm

disturbances should discuss the use of a Quinolone with their physician.

What about allergies? People who have known allergies or asthma may be at an increased risk for a reaction from any new medication. Signs of an allergic reaction are skin rash, hives, difficulty breathing, and swelling of the lips, tongue, or face. Of course, a person should be careful taking one Quinolone if there has been a previous reaction to a different Quinolone.

What if I'm pregnant, considering pregnancy or breast-feeding? Any drug taken during pregnancy is potentially dangerous to a fetus. The FDA has a grading system for each drug which reflects what is known medically. Quinolones are ranked C. This means it is not known whether it will harm the unborn baby. Cipro passes into breast milk and may affect bone development of the nursing baby. It is unknown if Tequin or Levaquin pass into breast milk. Always consult the physician before taking any drug during or when planning pregnancy or during breast feeding.

What are the effects on sexual function? There are no known effects of Quinolones on sexual function.

Are there other precautions?

- Do not take any antacids, medicines (sucralfate/Carafate) or multi-vitamins containing Iron, Calcium, Magnesium or zinc for 4 hours before or 2 hours after a dose of a Quinolone.
- With prolonged use, crystals may form in the kidney. This may be prevented by maintaining a generous urine flow by drinking several quarts of liquid each day.
- Quinolones may cause dizziness. Caution should be used when driving, operating machinery or performing hazardous activities.
- Continued or prolonged use of this as well as other antibiotics may result in a fungal infection. These usually occur in the mouth, rectum or vagina.
- People taking Quinolones may suffer torn tendons. The achilles tendon just above the heel on the back of the leg is a common site. If you feel any pain or inflammation in a tendon area, stop taking the medication, avoid exercise and contact your physician.
- Quinolones may rarely cause photosensitivity. Limit your exposure to the sun or ultraviolet lights. Notify your physician if you experience a sunburn-like reaction.

How long is it safe to take Quinolones? This drug usually can be taken long-term. The length of treatment depends upon the severity of the infection. Generally, Quinolones should be continued for at least 2 days after symptoms have disappeared.

How about side effects? Adverse reactions can occur with any drug, even over-the-counter medications. Some of these are mild such as a stomach upset, which may be avoided by taking the medication with food. Minor reactions may go away on their own but if they persist, contact the physician. For major reactions, the patient should contact the physician immediately. For Quinolones, the following are the observed side effects:

Minor:

Nausea, headache, indigestion, rash, constipation, diarrhea

Major:

Fever, sore throat, visual disturbances, palpitations, fainting, seizures, eye or skin yellowing, severe fatigue, easy bruising, muscle or joint pain