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Rifaximin for traveller's diarrhoea (Xifaxanta)

Take one 200 mg tablet every eight hours, for three days (Xifaxanta® brand).

Drink plenty of water or rehydration drinks, and eat light meals as soon as you feel able to.

The most common side-effects of rifaximin are feeling sick (nausea), feeling dizzy and headache.

About rifaximin

Type of medicine	A rifamycin antibiotic
Used for	Traveller's diarrhoea
Also called	Xifaxanta®
Available as	Tablets

Traveller's diarrhoea is diarrhoea that develops during, or shortly after, you have travelled abroad. Diarrhoea is defined as 'loose or watery stools, usually at least three times in 24 hours'. Traveller's diarrhoea is commonly caused by eating food or drinking water containing germs (bacteria). In most cases, the symptoms are mild, and the body's immune system clears them within a few days.

Rifaximin is an antibiotic which works within the gastrointestinal system. It is not absorbed into the body (this means that it is not suitable to treat other types of infection). You may be advised by your doctor to take a supply with you when you travel, 'just in case' you develop diarrhoea. You will be prescribed a brand called Xifaxanta®. The tablets are not suitable if you also have a high temperature (fever) or if there is blood in the diarrhoea – you should get medical assistance as soon as possible in these cases. Rifaximin should not be given to children.

(A brand of rifaximin tablets called Targaxan® is used to help prevent episodes of a problem called hepatic encephalitis in people with liver disease. If you are taking it for this reason, see the separate leaflet called [Rifaximin for liver problems](#).)

Before taking rifaximin

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking rifaximin it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby, or breastfeeding.
- If you have any problems with your kidneys.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to take rifaximin tablets

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about rifaximin and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.

- Take rifaximin exactly as your doctor tells you to. Take one 200 mg tablet every eight hours for three days (Xifaxanta® brand). It is important that you space the doses out evenly, and that you remember to finish the whole course of tablets. Swallow the tablets with a drink of water; they can be taken with or without food.
 - If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Try to take the correct number of doses each day, spaced out evenly. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed one.
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Getting the most from your treatment

- It is important for you to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You can drink 'safe' water (for example, bottled, or boiled and treated water) or rehydration drinks (which contain a balance of salts and sugars and can be bought from a pharmacy before you travel). Remember to make up rehydration drinks using safe water.
- Eat as soon as you feel able to. Plain foods such as bread and rice are good foods to eat. Try to avoid fatty, spicy or heavy food.
- Taking rifaximin could cause a slight reddish colour in your urine. This is normal and harmless.

Can rifaximin cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with rifaximin when taken for traveller's diarrhoea. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common rifaximin side-effects (these affect fewer than 1 in 10 people)	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling dizzy	Do not drive and do not use tools or machines while you feel dizzy
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask a pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller
Feeling sick (nausea), gastrointestinal upset, tummy (abdominal) discomfort	Stick to simple foods and remember to drink plenty of safe water
High temperature (fever)	If this continues, see or speak with a doctor for advice

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, speak with a doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store rifaximin

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

If you buy any medicines, always check with a pharmacist that they are suitable for you to take with your other medicines.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Xifaxanta® 200 mg Film-coated Tablets](#); Norgine Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated October 2020.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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