

## Balsalazide (Colazide)

Take balsalazide capsules with a meal or after a snack.

It is important that you keep your regular appointments with your doctor so that your progress can be checked. You will need to have regular blood tests.

Common side-effects tend to be minor, but on occasions, balsalazide can cause more serious problems. You should tell your doctor immediately if you have any unexplained bleeding, bruising, red or purple discolorations of your skin, a sore throat, or a high temperature (fever), or if you feel generally unwell.

### About balsalazide

Type of medicine	Aminosalicylate
Used for	Ulcerative colitis in adults
Also called	Colazide®
Available as	Capsules

**Ulcerative colitis** causes inflammation of the large intestine. This leads to problems such as ulceration and bleeding, and causes symptoms of abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Although it is not clear exactly how balsalazide works, it is thought to act on the cells which line your intestine to change the way that they make and release certain chemicals. These chemicals are thought to be a factor in causing the symptoms of ulcerative colitis. Balsalazide allows the damaged areas of your intestine to recover, and then helps to prevent your symptoms from flaring up again at a later date.

## **Before taking balsalazide**

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 balsalazide 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 or liver.
- If you have asthma.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine. It is particularly important that you tell your doctor if you have had an unusual reaction to aspirin, or to any other salicylate medicine.
- If you are taking or using 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 balsalazide**

- Before you start this treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside your pack. The manufacturer's leaflet will give you more information about balsalazide and a full list of side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Take balsalazide exactly as your doctor tells you to. They will tell you how many capsules to take for each dose, and when to take them. It is likely you will be asked to take three capsules three times a day at first, but your dose will be reduced to two capsules twice daily once your symptoms have improved. The directions will be printed on the label of the pack to remind you how to take the capsules.

- Take balsalazide capsules with a drink of water after a meal or snack. Do not open or chew the capsules.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is nearly time for your next dose, in which case leave out the forgotten dose. Remember to take your next dose when it is due. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor and clinic. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. You will need to have regular blood tests during this treatment.
- Treatment with balsalazide may be long-term in order to prevent your symptoms from flaring-up from time to time. Continue to take the capsules unless you are advised otherwise by your doctor.
- Your doctor may advise you to make some changes to your diet as part of your treatment. This may include a special diet or a nutritional supplement.
- If you have an allergic condition, such as asthma, you should let your doctor know straightaway if you find your allergic symptoms get worse. If this happens, your doctor may want to review your treatment or will arrange to see you more often to keep an eye on your progress.

## Can balsalazide 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 more common ones associated with balsalazide. 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.

<b>Balsalazide side-effects</b>	<b>What can I do if I experience this?</b>
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)	Stick to simple foods – avoid rich or spicy meals
Diarrhoea, abdominal pain	Drink plenty of water to replace lost fluids
Headache, joint or muscle aches	Drink plenty of water and ask a pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If it continues, let your doctor know
Cough, gallstone pain, feelings of numbness, hair loss	If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor

**Important:** balsalazide can sometimes cause allergic reactions and problems with your blood. You should contact your doctor immediately if:

- You have any difficulty in breathing, or any swelling of your face or tongue.
- You have any unexplained bleeding, bruising, red or purple discolorations on your skin, a sore throat, or a high temperature (fever), or if you feel generally unwell during this treatment.
- You develop an itchy rash.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to this medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

## **How to store balsalazide**

- 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

If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other 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.

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

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

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](#).

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Colazide® 750 mg Capsules](#); Almirall Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2018.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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