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Celecoxib capsules for pain and inflammation (Celebrex)

Celecoxib is a medicine called a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. It is also known as an 'NSAID'.

Before you take celecoxib, let your doctor know if you have ever had a bad reaction to any other anti-inflammatory painkiller.

Remember to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your progress can be monitored.

About celecoxib

Type of medicine	A selective inhibitor of cyclo-oxygenase-2 non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)
Used for	Relief of pain and inflammation in osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis or ankylosing spondylitis
Also called	Celebrex®
Available as	Capsules

[Anti-inflammatory painkillers](#) like celecoxib are sometimes called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), or just 'anti-inflammatories'. Celecoxib is used to treat painful rheumatic conditions such as [osteoarthritis](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#) and [ankylosing spondylitis](#). It eases pain and reduces inflammation.

Celecoxib is also known as a cyclo-oxygenase-2 inhibitor. This is because it works to relieve pain and inflammation by blocking an enzyme in the body called cyclo-oxygenase-2 (COX-2). COX-2 is involved in the production of irritant substances in the body in response to disease. By blocking the action of COX-2, celecoxib reduces the symptoms of pain and inflammation in arthritis.

Before taking celecoxib

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 celecoxib, it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you have asthma or any other allergic disorder.
- If you have had a stomach or duodenal ulcer, or if you have an inflammatory bowel disorder such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.
- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby, or breastfeeding.
- If you are under 18 or over 65 years of age.
- If you have liver or kidney problems.
- If you have a heart condition, or a problem with your blood vessels or circulation.
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have ever had blood clotting problems.
- If you have a connective tissue disorder, such as systemic lupus erythematosus (an inflammatory condition also called lupus, or SLE).
- 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.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine. It is particularly important that you tell your doctor if you have ever had a bad reaction to any other NSAID (such as aspirin, naproxen, diclofenac, and indometacin), or if you are allergic to a sulfonamide medicine (used to treat infection).

How to take celecoxib

- Before you start taking celecoxib, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. The manufacturer's leaflet will give you more information about celecoxib and provide a full list of side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Take celecoxib exactly as your doctor tells you to. The usual dose is one capsule, taken once or twice daily. There are two strengths of capsule available, 100 mg and 200 mg – your doctor will tell you which is right for you. Try to take your doses at the same times of day each day, as this will help you to remember to take the capsules regularly.
- Swallow the capsules whole with a drink of water. If you have difficulty swallowing the capsules they can be opened and the entire contents sprinkled on to a spoonful of soft food such as apple sauce, yoghurt or mashed banana. Swallow the mixture straightaway, followed by drinking a large glass of water.
- It is not important whether you take your doses before or after meals.
- 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 missed dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Your doctor will try to prescribe you the lowest dose for the shortest time to reduce the risk of side-effects. If you need to take celecoxib for a long time, your doctor may want to prescribe another medicine along with it to protect your stomach from irritation.
- Try to keep any regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. Your doctor will want to check your blood pressure from time to time while you are taking celecoxib.
- You should find that your pain is eased within a few days of starting to take the capsules. If after two weeks you find your pain is no better despite taking celecoxib, you should discuss this with your doctor, as an alternative painkiller may be more suitable for you.

- If you have asthma, symptoms such as wheeze or breathlessness can be made worse by anti-inflammatories such as celecoxib. If this happens to you, you should stop taking celecoxib and see your doctor as soon as possible.
- If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with an anti-inflammatory like celecoxib. This is because you should not take celecoxib with any other anti-inflammatory painkiller, some of which are available in cold and flu remedies which can be bought over the counter.
- If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

Can celecoxib 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 celecoxib. 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 celecoxib side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling dizzy	Do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you feel better
Diarrhoea	Drink plenty of water to replace any lost fluids
Headache	Drink plenty of water. If the headaches continue, speak with your doctor
Indigestion, wind, tummy (abdominal) pain	Stick to simple meals - avoid rich or spicy foods. If the discomfort continues, speak with your doctor
High blood pressure, swollen ankles, joint pain, fluid retention, flu-like illness, runny nose, cough, chest or urinary infections, and difficulties sleeping	If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor

Important: if you experience any of the following less common but more serious symptoms, stop taking celecoxib and contact your doctor for advice straightaway:

- If you have any breathing difficulties such as wheeze or breathlessness.
- If you have any signs of an allergic reaction such as swelling around your mouth or face, or a severe itchy skin rash.
- If you pass blood or black stools, bring up (vomit) blood, or have abdominal pains.

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

How to store celecoxib

- 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.

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, Celebrex® 100 mg and 200 mg Capsules](#); Upjohn UK Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated January 2021.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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