

LEVOTHYROXINE

Levothyroxine is a synthetic version of the thyroxine hormone which is produced naturally in the body by the thyroid gland and prevents the symptoms of hypothyroidism.

It is used to treat an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism).

Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid gland does not produce enough of the thyroid hormone called thyroxine. So, Levothyroxine is taken to replace the thyroxine hormone.

The dose of levothyroxine varies from person to person.

You may need to take several different tablets to make up your dose. Your doctor will tell you how many tablets to take each day.

This medication is preferably taken 30-60 mins before breakfast, caffeine containing drinks or other medication.

Monitoring:

When your medication is prescribed by the GP, you will be required to have regular blood test monitoring, to ensure their optimum safety.

These blood tests are required every 12 months and are comprised of a Thyroid Function Test (TFT).

However, you may need blood tests more often if your dose is changed, you start or stop a medication which can affect how the levothyroxine works, you develop symptoms that may suggest your dose is not quite correct or if you are pregnant.

Side Effects:

Talk to your Doctor or Pharmacist if you start to get these symptoms after switching brands of Levothyroxine, you may be sensitive to the new brand and may need to stay on the same brand of Levothyroxine you have had previously.

However, if any of these symptoms persist or bother you, please talk to your Doctor or Specialist.

- Feeling tired
- Weight gain
- Feeling depressed
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Headaches
- Feeling restless, excitable, sleeping problems
- Flushing or sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Shaking, usually of the hands

Tell your Doctor immediately if you develop a fast or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)

Pregnancy:

If you're planning to become pregnant or think you may be pregnant, it's important to talk to your doctor to get the right care for you and your baby.

Levothyroxine is safe to take during pregnancy.

Levothyroxine doses need to be carefully monitored during pregnancy. You'll need to have blood tests more regularly to check your thyroid hormone levels and to ensure you are on the right dose of Levothyroxine: if possible, have your thyroid function before conception; at diagnosis of pregnancy; at antenatal booking; during both the second and third trimesters, and after delivery (more frequent monitoring required on initiation or adjustment of levothyroxine).

Breastfeeding:

You can take Levothyroxine whilst you are breastfeeding.

If you notice your baby is not feeding as well as usual, or if there are any other concerns about your baby, please contact your midwife, health visitor or Doctor.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/underactive-thyroid-hypothyroidism/treatment/>

<https://www.btf-thyroid.org/hypothyroidism-leaflet>