



PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®)

What are influenza drugs?

Influenza (“flu”) is an illness caused by a virus. The drugs that treat and/or prevent the flu and other diseases caused by viruses are called antivirals. Oseltamivir (Oh-sel-TAM-i-veer), trade name Tamiflu® (TAM-ih-flew), is an antiviral drug that controls and prevents the flu.

Do I still need to get a flu shot?

Antiviral drugs are not a substitute for flu vaccine. They are best used along with flu vaccine to help control and prevent the flu.

Is this drug effective against all types of flu viruses?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Tamiflu® to treat and prevent illness from influenza A and B viruses. Studies have shown that Tamiflu® reduces flu symptoms if taken within 48 hours of symptom onset. If someone in your family is diagnosed with the flu, taking Tamiflu® may reduce your chances of getting sick.

What are the side effects of Tamiflu®?

The most common side effects taking this drug are nausea, vomiting, headache and fatigue. Taking Tamiflu® with food may reduce the chance of nausea and vomiting. If you develop an allergic reaction or severe rash, stop taking Tamiflu® and call your healthcare provider.

Who should take Tamiflu®?

The FDA approved Tamiflu® to treat and prevent influenza in adults and children 1 year old or older.

Who should not take Tamiflu®?

Do not take Tamiflu® if you are allergic to the main compound, oseltamivir phosphate. The dosage may need to be adjusted for people with kidney disease. Women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding are not recommended to take this medication. Tamiflu® is not recommended for use in children younger than 1 year of age. For complete safety information, talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Where can I get Tamiflu®?

Tamiflu® is available by prescription only and is not available over the counter.

How do I take Tamiflu®?

Tamiflu® is available as a pill for adults or in liquid form for children who cannot swallow pills. You can take Tamiflu® with food or without food. There is less chance of nausea and vomiting if the drug is taken with a light snack or meal.

If you have the flu: Take Tamiflu® twice a day for 5 days, once in the morning and once in the evening. Finish all of the pills, even if you start to feel better.

To prevent the flu: Take Tamiflu® once a day for 10 days or for as long as prescribed.

How and where should I store Tamiflu®?

Tamiflu® pills should be stored in dry place at room temperature below 77°F (25°C). Keep this medicine out of reach of children. Liquid Tamiflu® should be stored in a refrigerator. Do not freeze liquid Tamiflu®.

For More Information

Talk to your healthcare provider.

Visit the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services website at www.nj.gov/health

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: www.cdc.gov/flu