

# Medication Information Sheet



## **Clonidine**

brands: Catapres®, Catapres-TTS®

*Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.*

### **Information & potential benefits**

Clonidine is a pain and blood pressure medication. It is very unique. It was introduced and FDA approved as a blood pressure medication, but over time clonidine was found to block pain both at the peripheral nerves where the pain begins and also at the spinal cord where pain is transmitted. Clonidine also helps relieve/prevent withdrawal symptoms from opioid/narcotic pain medications. Clonidine also has other potential uses including tremor and attention-deficit disorder, among others.

### **Potential risks and side effects**

Because clonidine lowers blood pressure, it should be used with caution in those with low blood pressure or with heart disease. It also should be used with caution if there is liver or kidney dysfunction. Common side effects include sleepiness, especially when the medication is first used. It lowers blood pressure. Other side effects include dry mouth, dry eyes, fatigue, headache, nausea and impotence. More serious side effects include dizziness and lightheadedness because this may mean that the blood pressure is too low. We ask that each patient check blood pressure at home daily while using clonidine, looking for any change in the regular blood pressure. If there is any change or if the side effects above occur, patients should notify the prescribing provider immediately. Clonidine may work as a pain medication. Clonidine should not be stopped suddenly because of a withdrawal syndrome: the blood pressure could go up really high and cause serious problems. This medication is NOT to be used without the knowledge and permission of your primary care provider, because of the effect on blood pressure.

### **Dosing information**

Typical dosing begins very low and gradually increases. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

### **Important information**

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.