

FEBUXOSTAT - SAFE PRESCRIBING - SORTING OUT GOUT

1

- ▶ PROVIDE PROPHYLACTIC COLCHICINE OR NSAIDS FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS WHEN STARTING FEBUXOSTAT
- ▶ GRADUALLY TITRATE DOSE UPWARDS TO ACHIEVE TARGET SERUM URATE
- ▶ ADVISE PATIENTS TO CONTINUE WITH FEBUXOSTAT DURING ACUTE FLARES OF GOUT
- ▶ INFORM PATIENTS TO REPORT ANY RASH OR SIGNS OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Febuxostat is indicated for the treatment of chronic hyperuricaemia in patients with gout where urate deposition has already occurred. It is a useful alternative for patients who are intolerant of allopurinol, or if serum urate remains greater than their target level despite optimal doses of allopurinol, and probenecid.

Note: The target serum urate level is usually 0.36mmol/L, however a lower target (0.30mmol/L) may be required for patients with gouty tophi.

PROVIDE PROPHYLACTIC COLCHICINE OR NSAIDS FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS WHEN STARTING

When a patient is being initiated on febuxostat, it is essential that prophylactic doses of a NSAID (eg naproxen 250mg twice daily) or colchicine (0.5mg once or twice daily) are continued for at least the first 6 months. This is because there is a very high risk of acute gout attacks when serum urate changes rapidly.

GRADUALLY TITRATE DOSE UPWARDS TO ACHIEVE TARGET SERUM URATE

The usual starting dose is 80mg once daily. If the target serum urate is not achieved on this dose, and hepatic and renal function are normal, the dose may be gradually increased to 120mg once daily. Check liver function prior to the initiation of febuxostat, then after 1 and 3 months of treatment, and periodically thereafter based on clinical judgment. Inform patients that regular blood testing is required, and to report any symptoms of potential hepatic impairment such as nausea, fatigue, jaundice and dark urine. The efficacy and safety have not been fully evaluated in patients with severe renal impairment (eGFR < 30mL/min/1.73m²).

RECOMMENDED DOSING

CONDITION	STARTING DOSE	MAXIMUM DAILY DOSE
No hepatic impairment Adequate renal function (eGFR>30mL/min/1.73m ²)	80mg	120mg
Mild hepatic impairment	80mg	80mg

Note: Treatment with febuxostat in patients with ischaemic heart disease or congestive heart failure is not recommended.

ADVISE PATIENTS TO CONTINUE WITH FEBUXOSTAT DURING ACUTE FLARES OF GOUT

Gout is a long-term condition that requires long-term treatment to prevent acute flares and reduce the risk of joint erosion and permanent disability. Febuxostat needs to be taken continuously, even during acute flares of gout. If it is stopped suddenly, rapid increases in serum urate will increase the risk of an acute flare.

INFORM PATIENTS TO REPORT ANY RASH OR SIGNS OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Febuxostat has a similar safety profile to allopurinol, and like allopurinol there is a risk of hypersensitivity. These reactions are considered to be rare, and are more likely to occur during the first month of treatment. Reactions range from a mild rash to anaphylaxis. It is important that patients know they should stop taking febuxostat as soon as they notice a progressive rash, swelling, or any other signs of allergic reaction, and to seek medical attention immediately. There appears to be greater risk of hypersensitivity with patients who have experienced a reaction with allopurinol, or if they have renal impairment.

Some patients may experience dizziness or blurred vision with febuxostat. Advise patients not to drive or to use dangerous machinery until they are certain that they will not be affected.

Note: Febuxostat is not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding due to lack of data in such patients.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Dinar Jabin, Rheumatologist, Waitemata District Health Board, for her valuable contribution to this bulletin.

KEY REFERENCES

1. Te Arai BioFarma Ltd. Febuxostat (Adenuric) data sheet 19-04-14 www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/a/adenuurictab.pdf (Accessed 26-06-14)
2. New Zealand Formulary, febuxostat www.nzf.org.nz/nzf/5685 (Accessed 26-06-14)

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FEBUXOSTAT AND A FULL REFERENCE LIST](#)

For further information on other high-risk medicines visit our website at: www.saferx.co.nz