

Patient Advice When Starting Comtess

What is Comtess?

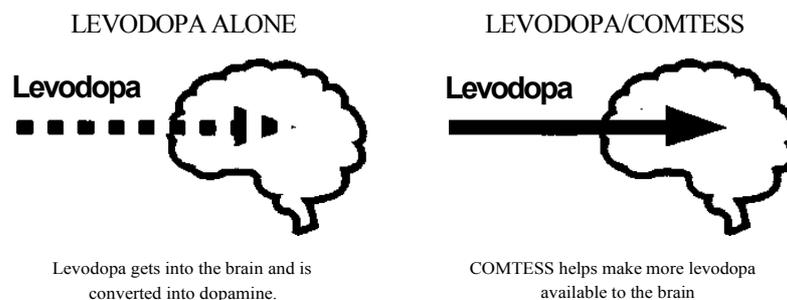
Comtess (entacapone) is a medication for people with Parkinson's disease, who are taking levodopa. Comtess is a member of a class of medications called Catechol O-Methyl Transferase inhibitors. More simply, these medications are called COMT inhibitors. When taken properly, Comtess works by improving the response to each dose of levodopa.

How do Comtess tablets work?

In the brain there is a group of cells that produce a chemical called dopamine. Dopamine is the chemical that helps the brain control activities, such as walking, talking and moving. People who have Parkinson's don't produce enough dopamine.

The principal treatment for Parkinson's is a drug called levodopa. Levodopa is converted to dopamine in the brain. Supplementing dopamine in the brain by taking levodopa can help control the symptoms of Parkinson's. Levodopa comes in two main forms: Sinemet and Madopar. However the majority of each dose of levodopa does not reach the brain as it is broken down in the bloodstream and gut.

Comtess works by blocking an enzyme called COMT, which breaks down levodopa before it can get to the brain, where it is needed. This means that more levodopa can enter the brain and improve symptoms. Comtess must be taken at the same time as each dose of levodopa/ and should improve your response to levodopa.



Why have I been prescribed Comtess?

Your doctor prescribed **Comtess** to help you get more benefit from your levodopa therapy. The addition of Comtess will smoothen and prolong the delivery of levodopa to the brain, and therefore should :-

1. improve and lengthen your response to each dose of levodopa and
2. delay the need to increase your levodopa dose.

How effective is Comtess?

In clinical trials, **Comtess** significantly improved the control of the symptoms of Parkinson's by prolonging the benefits of levodopa. This provides you with extra time to carry on with your normal activities.

Can Comtess be taken without levodopa?

No. **Comtess** has no effect on the symptoms of Parkinson's by itself. To get benefits from **Comtess**, it must be taken along with your levodopa medication.

Are there side effects associated with Comtess therapy?

Comtess has been shown to cause a few side effects, most of which can be managed without stopping the treatment. The most commonly reported side effects are unwanted or uncontrolled movements (dyskinesias), and nausea. These side effects are related to an increase in the amount of levodopa in the brain, and are generally mild to moderate in severity. These side effects may be managed by lowering the levodopa dose. You should contact your doctor before altering any medication. Your doctor may have to either reduce the amount of levodopa medication you take, or reduce the number of times you take levodopa during the day.

Other side effects include diarrhoea, constipation and abdominal pain. In rare instances diarrhoea can be severe, resulting in the need to stop **Comtess**. In some people, **Comtess** may cause the urine to change colour - becoming brownish orange. This is a harmless side effect and is not a cause for concern. While these are the most commonly reported side effects, this does not mean you will necessarily experience them while taking **Comtess**.

If you experience any side effects, or have any questions about the medication you are taking, talk to your doctor.