L-ornithine-L-aspartate granules (Hepa-Merz® sachets) for Hepatic Encephalopathy
Information Sheet

Introduction

Hepa-Merz® is a combination of the amino acids ornithine and aspartate. It is licensed in other European countries but not in the UK. Ornithine and aspartate are amino acids which are important in the biochemical pathways that detoxify ammonia. In cirrhosis, impaired hepatic metabolism and blood flow lead to raised serum and CNS ammonia concentrations. Abnormal ammonia metabolism and the resulting accumulation of toxic ammonia is one of several possible mechanisms for hepatic encephalopathy. Ornithine and aspartate are substrates in metabolising ammonia to urea and glutamine, respectively.

Dosage and administration: The dose is one or two sachets three times a day, dissolved in liquid (e.g. a glass of water, tea or juice).

Available as: Hepa Merz® sachets 5g. Each 5g sachet of granules contains 3g of the amino acid combination. There is only one size of sachet available, although there are several pack sizes (30, 50 and 100 sachets). The other excipients are citric acid, saccharin, sodium cyclamate (a sweetener), povidone (to enhance dissolution), fructose (1.13g) and a colouring and flavouring agent known as E110. It is readily available for community pharmacies to order from a range of suppliers including:

IDIS World Medicines BR Pharma Ltd
Idis House Unit 3 Manor Point
Churchfield Road Manor Way
WEYBRIDGE Borehamwood
KT13 8DB WD6 1EU
Tel: 019 3282 4100 Tel:020 8207 0770
Fax: 019 3282 4200 Fax:020 8207 5557

It may take up to one week to acquire stock.

Adverse Effects, Precautions and Contraindications

There are no special warnings or precautions to observe with the ongoing use of this product. However, severe renal dysfunction is a contraindication to the use of the product, and it is not known whether there are harmful effects from use of the product during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. There is no ‘drug’ monitoring to undertake for patients on Hepa-Merz®.

Monitoring requirements

Not applicable - no monitoring required

Drug Interactions

Not applicable – none known

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