

Description

The fight against influenza has found a powerful weapon in Tamiflu (oseltamivir phosphate), which stops influenza in its tracks. Tamiflu is a neuraminidase inhibitor and is designed to specifically target the influenza virus.

Tamiflu blocks the action of the neuraminidase enzyme on the surface of the virus. When neuraminidase is inhibited, the virus is not able to spread to and infect other cells in the body.

Tamiflu is designed to be active against all clinically relevant influenza viruses.¹

Tamiflu delivers:

- 38 percent reduction in the severity of symptoms²
- 67 percent reduction in secondary complications such as bronchitis, pneumonia and sinusitis in otherwise healthy individuals³
- 37 percent reduction in the duration of influenza illness⁴

In children, Tamiflu delivers:

- 26 percent reduction in the severity and duration of influenza symptoms⁵
- 44 percent reduced incidence of associated otitis media as compared to standard care⁶

* Compared to placebo, when treatment initiated within the first 24 hours after onset of symptoms based on trials in otherwise healthy individuals⁷

Administration and dosage

Tamiflu is given orally, as a convenient capsule (75mg), enabling it to reach all key sites in the body where the virus multiplies.⁸ The dose for the adult treatment of influenza is one capsule twice daily for five days. Treatment should begin as early as possible after onset of symptoms. The earlier oseltamivir is given, the quicker the patient recovers from influenza.

Tamiflu was shown to provide up to 89 percent overall protective efficacy against clinical influenza in adults and adolescents who had been in close contact with influenza-infected patients.⁹

Clinical data summary

To date over 11,000 patients (aged one – 97 years old) have received Tamiflu in the clinical trial programme. In these clinical studies,¹⁰ Tamiflu has been shown to be highly effective, well tolerated and has demonstrated a good safety profile. A recent clinical study has shown that treatment within the first 12 hours of influenza symptom onset is more effective than intervention at 48 hours.⁷ Other treatment clinical studies have shown Tamiflu reduces the severity of symptoms, including fever and cough by up to 40 percent.^{4,2,4} Tamiflu is also effective in the treatment of influenza in children and prevention of influenza both in a family and nursing home setting.^{4,7,11}

Tamiflu reduces secondary complications of influenza, such as bronchitis and pneumonia (lower respiratory tract infections), by 67 percent in previously healthy adults and associated antibiotic use by 26 percent.³ Thousands of patients are currently hospitalised each year as a result of influenza complications. Tamiflu has been shown to reduce hospitalisations in influenza patients by 59 percent.³

Safety

Results from treatment clinical studies showed that Tamiflu is well tolerated, with a few patients reporting transient, mostly mild nausea or vomiting. (It has to be remembered that influenza itself can cause patients to feel nauseous). During long-term use in prophylaxis studies these events were reported in similar incidence for Tamiflu compared to placebo. The adverse events were not associated with significant withdrawals from the trial and it was found that taking the drug with food improved tolerance.¹⁰

Registration

Tamiflu is available for the treatment of influenza in adults and children aged one year and above. Over 21 million patients have been treated with Tamiflu in over 40 countries worldwide including United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, the EU, Switzerland and Latin America. It is also approved in the EU and the US for the prevention of influenza in adolescents > 13 years of age and adults.

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