

Before starting lithium . . .

1. Take the ECG card to the ECG (Cardiology) department at the hospital to have a heart tracing done
2. Make an appointment with your Practice Nurse to have the following blood tests:

U+Es (kidneys)
LFTs (liver)
TFTs (thyroid)
Calcium
Glucose (sugar)
FBC (blood count)

3. Hand in the prescription request to your surgery

Lithium

- Lithium is a salt which occurs naturally in the body
- Boosting lithium levels in the blood to between 0.4 and 1.0 can help to treat or prevent mood problems
- Because different people require different doses and lithium may cause side-effects, blood tests are carried out 2 or 3 times a year (to monitor kidneys, thyroid, and lithium/calcium levels)
- Lithium should be taken at 10pm and blood tests at 10am

Side-effects

- Slight tremor in hands
- Slight tummy upset
- Nausea
- Metallic taste
- Drinking more
- Passing water more
- A little weight gain

Less common

- Skin problems (alopecia, acne, psoriasis)
- Vomiting
- Thyroid swelling
- Kidney upset
- Ankle swelling
- Minor ECG changes

Toxicity

- Worsening of any side-effects
- Coarse tremor
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Unsteadiness in walking
- Clumsiness
- Lethargy
- Drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Funny jerks or spasms
- Fits

➤ **SEE YOUR DOCTOR**

Don't forget . . .

- Don't stop lithium suddenly (risk of serious relapse)
- Don't fall pregnant without consulting your doctor (risk to baby)
- Don't take any new medicines without checking it's OK
- See your doctor over any problems, especially if you become dehydrated

Before starting lithium . . .

1. Take the ECG card to the ECG (Cardiology) department at the hospital to have a heart tracing done
2. Make an appointment with your Practice Nurse to have the following blood tests:

U+Es (kidneys)
LFTs (liver)
TFTs (thyroid)
Calcium
Glucose (sugar)
FBC (blood count)

3. Hand in the prescription request to your surgery

Lithium

- Lithium is a salt which occurs naturally in the body
- Boosting lithium levels in the blood to between 0.4 and 1.0 can help to treat or prevent mood problems
- Because different people require different doses and lithium may cause side-effects, blood tests are carried out 2 or 3 times a year (to monitor kidneys, thyroid, and lithium/calcium levels)
- Lithium should be taken at 10pm and blood tests at 10am

Side-effects

- Slight tremor in hands
- Slight tummy upset
- Nausea
- Metallic taste
- Drinking more
- Passing water more
- A little weight gain

Less common

- Skin problems (alopecia, acne, psoriasis)
- Vomiting
- Thyroid swelling
- Kidney upset
- Ankle swelling
- Minor ECG changes

Toxicity

- Worsening of any side-effects
- Coarse tremor
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Unsteadiness in walking
- Clumsiness
- Lethargy
- Drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Funny jerks or spasms
- Fits

➤ **SEE YOUR DOCTOR**

Don't forget . . .

- Don't stop lithium suddenly (risk of serious relapse)
- Don't fall pregnant without consulting your doctor (risk to baby)
- Don't take any new medicines without checking it's OK
- See your doctor over any problems, especially if you become dehydrated