

Consumer Medicine Information

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Karvea.

It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have benefits and risks. Your doctor has weighed the benefits of you taking this medicine against the risks it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with your medicine.

You may need to read it again.

What Karvea is used for

Karvea is used to lower high blood pressure, which doctors call hypertension.

Everyone has blood pressure. This pressure helps get your blood all around your body. Your blood pressure may be different at different times of the day, depending on how busy or worried you are. You have hypertension (high blood pressure) when your blood pressure stays higher than is needed, even when you are calm and relaxed.

There are often no symptoms of high blood pressure. The only way of knowing that you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked on a regular basis. If high blood pressure is not treated it can lead to serious health problems, such as stroke, heart disease and kidney failure. Karvea is also used in the treatment of kidney disease in patients with high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.

How Karvea works

Karvea belongs to a group of medicines known as angiotensin-II receptor antagonists. Angiotensin II is a substance produced in the body that causes blood vessels to narrow. Karvea blocks angiotensin-II and therefore widens your blood vessels, making it easier for your heart to pump blood throughout your body. This helps to lower your blood pressure.

Karvea also slows the decrease of kidney function in patients with high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.

Your doctor may have prescribed Karvea for another reason. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why Karvea has been prescribed for you.

This medicine is only available with a doctor's prescription.

There is no evidence that this medicine is addictive.

Before you take Karvea

When you must not take it

Do not take Karvea if:

- **you are pregnant (or think you may be pregnant) or are planning to become pregnant;**
Karvea may affect your developing baby if you take it during pregnancy.
- **you are breast-feeding;**
It is not known if Karvea passes into breast milk, therefore it is recommended

that you not take it while you are breast-feeding;

- **you are allergic to irbesartan or to any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet;**
- **you are diabetic or have kidney problems and are being treated with an ACE inhibitor, any aliskiren-containing medicines or a group of medicines known as AIIRAs (medicines also used to treat high blood pressure);**
- **the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering;**
- **the expiry date on the pack has passed;**
If you take this medicine after the expiry date has passed, it may not work.

If you are not sure if you should start taking Karvea, talk to your doctor.

Karvea should not be given to children.

Before you start to take it

Tell your doctor if you have any allergies to:

- any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet, including lactose
- any other medicines
- any other substances, such as foods, preservatives or dyes

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant.

Tell your doctor if you are breast feeding or plan to breastfeed.

Tell your doctor if you have or have had any medical conditions, especially the following:

- **recent excessive vomiting or diarrhoea;**
- **kidney problems, or you have had a kidney transplant or dialysis**
- **heart problems,**
- **liver problems, or have had liver problems in the past**
- **high levels of potassium in your blood**
- **you are strictly restricting your salt intake.**

Tell your doctor if you plan to have surgery (even at the dentist) that needs a general anaesthetic.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell them before you take Karvea.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Some medicines may affect the way others work. Also, some other medicines used to treat high blood pressure may have an additive effect with Karvea in lowering blood pressure. This may happen with diuretics (fluid tablets). As a result you may need different amounts of your medicines.

It is important to tell your doctor if you are taking or plan to take any of the following:

- potassium supplements, potassium-containing salt substitutes (you may need to have blood tests done regularly)

- diuretics (fluid tablets)
- medicines containing lithium (you may need to have blood tests done regularly).
- anti-inflammatory medicines such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (for example diclofenac, ibuprofen) and COX-2 inhibitors (for example celecoxib) used to relieve pain, swelling and other symptoms of inflammation including arthritis. Taking Karvea and an anti-inflammatory medicine alone or with a thiazide diuretic (fluid tablet) may damage your kidneys. It may also reduce the effect Karvea has on lowering blood pressure.

Your doctor and pharmacist may have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking Karvea.

How to take Karvea

How much to take

Your doctor will tell you how many tablets to take each day.

Usually patients start with one 150 mg tablet once a day. However, some patients may need a lower starting dose. Your doctor will tell you if this is necessary. The full blood pressure lowering effect of Karvea should be reached about 4-6 weeks after starting treatment.

Depending on how your blood pressure responds, your daily dose of Karvea may need to be increased. Most patients take either 150 mg or 300 mg each day.

In patients with high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes, 300 mg once daily is the preferred maintenance dose for slowing the progression of associated kidney disease.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of the correct dose for you.

They will tell you exactly how much to take.

Follow the instructions they give you.

How to take it

Swallow the tablet whole with a glass of water.

It does not matter whether you take Karvea tablets before or after food.

When to take it

Take Karvea at about the same time each day.

Taking your tablets at the same time each day will have the best effect. It will also help you remember when to take the tablets.

How long to take it

Continue taking Karvea until your doctor tells you to stop.

Karvea helps to control your high blood pressure, but it does not cure it. Therefore Karvea must be taken every day.

To help you remember to take your tablets each day, Karvea tablets are supplied in a Calendar pack with the foil backing marked with the days of the week. This is just a way to help you to remember to take your tablets. All of the tablets in the pack are the same.

When you start a new strip of tablets, take the tablet marked "START" at the end of the blister strip. On the next day, take the tablet marked with the relevant day of the week.

Continue taking your tablets each day until all of the tablets are taken. Commence the next strip at "START" and continue as before.

If you forget to take it

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose when you are meant to. Otherwise, take it as soon as you remember, and go back to taking your tablets as you would normally.

Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose you missed.

This may increase the chance of you getting any unwanted side effects.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

If you have trouble remembering to take your tablets, ask your pharmacist for some hints.

If you take too much (overdose)

Immediately telephone your doctor or Poisons Information Centre (telephone: 13 11 26) or go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital, if you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much Karvea. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

You may need urgent medical attention.

If you take too many Karvea tablets you will probably feel light-headed or dizzy.

While you are using Karvea

Things you must do

Tell any other doctors, dentists, and pharmacists who are treating you that you are taking Karvea.

If you become pregnant while taking Karvea tell your doctor immediately.

Have your blood pressure checked when your doctor tells you to, to make sure Karvea is working.

If you are about to be started on any new medicine, tell your doctor and pharmacist that you are taking Karvea.

If you plan to have surgery that needs a general anaesthetic, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking Karvea.

Your blood pressure may drop suddenly.

Make sure you drink enough water during exercise and hot weather when you are taking Karvea, especially if you sweat a lot.

If you do not drink enough water while taking Karvea, you may faint or feel light-headed or sick. This is because your body does not have enough fluid and your blood pressure is low. If you continue to feel unwell, tell your doctor.

If you have excessive vomiting and/or diarrhoea while taking Karvea, tell your doctor.

You may lose too much water and salt and your blood pressure may drop too much.

If you feel light headed or dizzy after taking your first dose of Karvea, or when your dose is increased, tell your doctor immediately.

Things you must not do

Do not give Karvea tablets to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not take Karvea to treat any other complaints unless your doctor or pharmacist tells you to.

Do not stop taking Karvea, or lower the dosage, without checking with your doctor.

Things to be careful of

If you feel light-headed, dizzy or faint when getting out of bed or standing up, get up slowly.

Standing up slowly, especially when you get up from bed or chairs, will help your body get used to the change in position and blood pressure. If this problem continues or gets worse, talk to your doctor.

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how Karvea affects you.

As with many other medicines used to treat high blood pressure, Karvea may cause dizziness or light-headedness in some people.

If this occurs do not drive.

Make sure you know how you react to Karvea before you drive a car, operate machinery or do anything else that could be dangerous if you are dizzy or light-headed.

If you drink alcohol, dizziness or light-headedness may be worse.

Things that would be helpful for lowering your blood pressure

Some self help measures suggested below may help your condition. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about these measures and for more information.

- **Alcohol** - your doctor may advise you to limit your alcohol intake.
- **Weight** - if you are overweight, your doctor may suggest losing some weight to help lower your blood pressure and help lessen the amount of work your heart has to do. Some people may need a dietician's help to lose weight.
- **Diet** - your doctor may advise you to eat a healthy low-fat diet which includes plenty of fresh vegetables, fruit, bread, cereals and fish.
- **Salt** - your doctor may advise you to watch the amount of salt in your diet. To reduce your salt intake you should avoid using salt in cooking or at the table.
- **Exercise** - regular exercise helps to reduce blood pressure and helps get the heart fitter, but it is important not to overdo it. Walking is good exercise, but try to find a route that is reasonably flat. Before starting any exercise, ask your doctor about the best kind of programme for you.
- **Smoking** - your doctor may advise you to stop smoking or at least cut down.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking Karvea.

Karvea helps most people with high blood pressure, but it may have unwanted side effects in a few people. All medicines can

have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- headache
- dizziness or light-headedness (vertigo)
- unusual tiredness or weakness, fatigue
- nausea/vomiting.

These are common side effects. They are generally mild and do not normally require treatment to be interrupted.

Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

- skin rash or itchiness
- aching muscles, not caused by exercise
- muscle pain or weakness
- buzzing, ringing or other persistent noise in the ear
- yellowing of the skin and/or eyes, also called jaundice
- symptoms that may indicate kidney disease, such as passing little or no urine, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, breathlessness, loss of appetite and weakness
- symptoms that may indicate high potassium levels in the blood, such as nausea, diarrhoea, muscle weakness, change in heart rhythm
- symptoms that may indicate liver disease such as nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, feeling generally unwell, fever, itching, yellowing of the skin and eyes and dark coloured urine
- symptoms that may indicate low platelet count such as easy or excessive bruising, bleeding from gums or nose, prolonged bleeding from cuts and blood in urine or stools.

These are serious side effects. Skin rash and itchiness may be symptoms of an allergic reaction. You may need medical attention.

These side effects are not common.

If any of the following happen, stop taking Karvea and either tell your doctor immediately or go to Accident and Emergency Department at your nearest hospital:

- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing;
- severe and sudden onset of pinkish, itchy swellings on the skin, also called hives or nettle rash.

These are very serious side effects.

You may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation.

These side effects are very rare.

Other side effects not listed above may occur in some patients. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

After using Karvea

Storage

Keep your Karvea tablets in the blister pack until it is time to take them.

If you take the tablets out of the blister pack they may not keep well.

Keep Karvea tablets in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25 degrees C.

Do not store Karvea or any other medicine in the bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave them near a radiator, in a car on hot days or on a window sill.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Disposal

If your doctor tells you to stop taking Karvea or the tablets have passed their expiry date, ask your pharmacist what to do with any tablets that are left over.

Product description

What it looks like

Karvea 75 mg tablets: white, oval shaped film-coated tablets with a heart shape imprinted on one side and "2871" engraved on the other side. Blister pack sizes include: 3*, 5*, 7*, 14*, 28*, 30, 56* and 98* tablets. AUST R 101702.

Karvea 150 mg tablets: white, oval shaped film-coated tablets with a heart shape imprinted on one side and "2872" engraved on the other side. Blister pack sizes include: 3*, 5*, 7*, 14*, 28*, 30, 56* and 98* tablets. AUST R 101706.

Karvea 300 mg tablets: white, oval shaped film-coated tablets with a heart shape imprinted on one side and "2873" engraved on the other side. Blister pack sizes include: 3*, 5*, 7*, 14*, 28*, 30, 56* and 98* tablets. AUST R 101708.

* presentations currently not-marketed.

Active ingredients

Karvea 75 mg tablets: 75 mg irbesartan per tablet.

Karvea 150 mg tablets: 150 mg irbesartan per tablet.

Karvea 300 mg tablets: 300 mg irbesartan per tablet.

Other Ingredients

Karvea tablets also contain carnauba wax, croscarmellose sodium, hypromellose, lactose, macrogol 3000, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, silicon dioxide, and titanium dioxide

Supplier

Karvea is supplied in Australia by:

sanofi-aventis australia pty ltd
12-24 Talavera Road
Macquarie Park, NSW 2113.

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Karvea is a registered trademark of sanofi-aventis.

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