

## Medication Information

### Aricept

Aricept (donepezil hydrochloride) is a medication used to treat dementia and may be helpful in other conditions involving cognitive impairment. The usual daily dosage is 5-10 mg. It may require 6-8 weeks before the full effects are noticed.

**Precautions:** Aricept must be taken on a regular basis to be of benefit and should not be discontinued suddenly. This medication can cause dizziness, so do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how it will affect you. It is best to avoid any use of alcohol or street drugs when taking this medication. If there is a possibility you may become pregnant or breast-feed, consult with your physician. Drug interactions may occur with Tegretol, Depakote, Dilantin, Dexamethasone, Rifampin, Phenobarbital, Ketoconazole; Bethanechol, Quinidine, and Succinylcholine.,

**Common side effects include:** nausea, diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, dizziness, headache, loss of appetite, weight loss, sleep problems, depressed mood, abnormal dreaming, frequent urination, muscle cramps, and slowed heart rate. Other adverse effects not listed here may occur. Contact your physician if you develop any unusual or disturbing symptoms.

**Alternative Treatments:** Other medications used to treat dementia include Reminyl, Namenda, Exelon, and Cognex. Certain "natural" substances have been found helpful in improving memory, concentration, and focus. These are not as well studied, are often manufactured with less quality control than medications, can cause adverse reactions, and are usually less predictably effective than medication. They include phosphatidyl serine, ginkgo biloba, and vincopectine.