

Patient information factsheet

Gepants for the prevention of episodic and chronic migraine

We have given you this factsheet because you have been diagnosed with either:

- episodic migraine (when you have less than 15 headache days a month) or
- chronic migraine (when you have 15 or more headache days a month (with features of migraine headache on at least eight days per month) for more than three months).

This factsheet contains information about a preventative treatment for episodic and chronic migraine called gepants. It explains what gepants are, how they work and the possible side effects of the treatment. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP)?

CGRP is a type of neurotransmitter (a chemical messenger in the body that passes signals from nerve cells to target cells) that helps pain signals pass through the nervous system. It has also been associated with triggering migraine attacks.

What are gepants?

Gepants are a type of medication that can be used to help prevent migraine attacks.

Gepants work by blocking either CGRP itself or the receptor to which CGRP binds. By blocking the action of CGRP, these medications may reduce how many migraine attacks you get and how severe they are.

Are there different types of gepants?

There are several different types of gepants. The following two medications are currently approved for use on the NHS in the UK for the prevention of migraine:

- Rimegepant (Vydura®) – for episodic migraine
- Atogepant (Aquipta®) – for episodic and chronic migraine

Your headache specialist will prescribe the most appropriate medication for you.

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How are gepants given?

Gepant	Type of medication	How to take it
Rimegepant (Vydura®)	Dissolvable wafer	Place the wafer on or under your tongue. It will dissolve in your mouth. It can be taken without liquid. It should be taken on alternate days (every other day).
Atogepant (Aquipta®)	Oral tablet	Swallow the tablet whole with a glass of water. It can be taken with or without food. It should be taken once a day.

Are gepants suitable for everyone?

Gepants have been approved for use by the NHS for people who experience four or more migraine days a month. However, we can only prescribe this type of medication if:

- you have already tried at least three migraine preventative medications
- you are not taking painkillers too often
- you have kept a headache diary for at least three months before starting to take gepants (you must then continue with this diary while you receive treatment)

Gepants are **not** suitable for:

- anyone who is pregnant or trying to get pregnant (it is recommended that treatment is stopped one week before trying to get pregnant)
- anyone who is breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed (please ask your headache specialist for more information)
- children
- people with a recent history of stroke or major heart disease
- people with severe liver impairment

How should gepants be stored?

The medication should be stored at room temperature and in its original packaging (this will protect the medication from any moisture).

How long will I need to have gepants for?

We will initially prescribe you 12 weeks' worth of gepants. Please collect your prescription from the outpatient pharmacy at Southampton General Hospital.

After the 12-week trial period, you will have an appointment with a headache specialist who will review how effective the treatment has been. We will stop prescribing gepants if the migraine frequency does not reduce by:

- at least 50% in people with episodic migraine or
- at least 30% in people with chronic migraine.

We may also stop prescribing gepants if:

- you fail to attend any follow-up appointments
- you fail to keep a headache diary
- your headaches stop responding to the medication (for example, if the frequency of your headaches returns to what it was before you started the treatment)

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If the treatment is successful, we will prescribe you another 12 weeks' worth of gepants and transfer your care over to your general practitioner (GP). Your GP will then be responsible for your future repeat prescriptions.

Will I be monitored while having gepants?

You must keep a record of your headaches in a headache diary while you receive gepants. In your diary, you will need to record whether you had a headache and how severe it was each day.

Please make sure you submit your headache diary before your 12-week review. You can submit your headache diary to us in several ways. For example, you can:

- email it to us at neurologyadmin@uhs.nhs.uk
- upload it to My Medical Record (for more information about this, please visit: www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/my-medical-record)
- send it to us in the post

What are the possible side effects?

Gepants are relatively safe, but like all medications, they can cause some side effects.

The most common side effects include:

- nausea (feeling sick)
- decreased appetite
- constipation
- tiredness
- weight loss

These side effects may affect up to one in 10 people.

For the full list of possible side effects, please read the leaflet supplied with your medication. If you experience any side effects, please contact us, your GP or NHS 111 (as appropriate) for advice as soon as possible.

As gepants are a relatively new treatment, we do not currently have much data on the long-term safety of them. For this reason, your treatment will need to be reviewed on a regular basis and should be stopped if there is no obvious benefit to your health.

How effective are gepants?

Gepants will not work for everyone. However, they have been shown to be effective for 50% of the people who have tried them. The benefits from the treatment will also vary from person to person. If the treatment is successful, most people will still get some headaches, but they will be less severe and occur less often.

What happens if the treatment is not effective?

If gepants do not work for you, your headache specialist will discuss alternative migraine treatments that may be suitable for you. If no further specialist medication is necessary, we will usually discharge you back to your GP for ongoing supportive care.

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Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact your consultant's secretary using the email address below. When you email, make sure you include your name, date of birth and hospital number.

Email: neurologyadmin@uhs.nhs.uk

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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