

You or your loved one is taking a medication called Ondansetron (brand name Zofran®). Ondansetron is considered an antiemetic and is primarily used at the end of life to help with nausea and vomiting.

Ondansetron usually comes as a tablet or liquid, which can both be swallowed. The liquid can be used under the tongue (sublingually) if you or your loved one is unable to swallow.

Ondansetron also comes as an oral disintegrating tablet (ODT) that can be used if you or your loved one has difficulty swallowing whole tablets. The ODT tablet has a few special instructions:

- Use dry hands to remove the ODT tablet from its package by peeling back the foil and not pushing it through the foil (this will damage the tablet).
- Do not swallow the ODT tablet whole. Allow it to dissolve on top of the tongue without chewing.
- As the saliva dissolves the tablet, swallow several times.

This medication may be included in a “kit” with other medications to use as needed to help treat new or worsening symptoms, or it may be used separately as needed or routinely. Make sure to follow the hospice team’s instructions carefully when using ondansetron.

Possible side effects of ondansetron:

Seek emergency medical help if you or your loved one have any of the following signs of a severe allergic reaction: swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat; hives; or difficulty breathing.

Contact the hospice team immediately if you or your loved one is experiencing one or more of these serious side effects. Side effects to ondansetron may be very concerning, but the hospice team will be on the look-out for serious side effects and can change therapy if necessary.

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| • Chest pain | • Severe headache |
| • Passing out | • Flushing or sweating a lot |
| • Slow or fast heartbeat | • Severe nausea or diarrhea |
| • Abnormal heartbeat | • Tremors |
| • Abdominal pain | • Sensing things that seem real but are not |
| • Difficulty urination | |
| • Dizziness | |

Potential less serious side effects of using ondansetron may include:

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| • Headache | • Diarrhea |
| • Loss of strength and energy | • Anxiety |
| • Constipation | • Fatigue |

Other things to be aware of when using ondansetron:

Contact the hospice team if you or your loved one’s symptoms get worse or do not improve.

Reference: Clinical Pharmacology, last update Feb 2024