



STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD & NECK SURGERY

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Patient Information On

FLUOROQUINOLONE ANTIBIOTICS

What are Fluoroquinolone antibiotics?

Fluoroquinolones are broad-spectrum oral antibiotics that are effective for many types of sinus infections. They are among the most commonly prescribed class of antibiotics in the United States. Among the most well-known are Cipro (Ciprofloxacin), Levaquin (Levofloxacin), & Avelox (Moxifloxacin).

How should this medication be taken?

Because calcium can bind the fluoroquinolone antibiotic and make it ineffective, it is recommended to avoid taking dairy products, calcium supplements or calcium-containing antacids for 2 hours before and 2 hours after taking the antibiotic. Otherwise there are no other restrictions.

What are potential side effects?

“Black Box” Warnings: The FDA has publicized the following potentially serious adverse effects that can occur infrequently with taking quinolones orally:

- Tendonitis/tendon rupture: This risk exists across all ages; risk further increases in: older patients (>60 years of age), patients taking corticosteroids, and patients with an organ transplant. At the first sign of tendon pain, swelling, or inflammation, stop taking the antibiotic, avoid exercise and use of the affected area, and promptly contact your healthcare provider.
- Peripheral Neuropathy: Symptoms include pain, burning, tingling, numbness, or weakness of the arms or legs. Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you develop any of these symptoms.
- Myasthenia Gravis: Patients with myasthenia gravis may experience worsening of symptoms

Other more common potential adverse reactions:

- Nausea/vomiting
- Headache
- Abdominal pain/diarrhea/constipation
- Insomnia
- Dizziness

Serious but less common adverse reactions:

- Retinal detachment
- Kidney failure
- Hallucination, psychotic reactions, depression, suicidal ideation
- Hearing problems
- Painful rashes
- Sun sensitivity
- Seizures
- Cardiac arrhythmia

Please contact our office at 650-723-5281 if you think you may be experiencing side effects from taking fluoroquinolone antibiotics or if you have any further questions.