

Mefloquine Malaria Prophylaxis

Liverpool School of
Tropical Medicine



Mefloquine (Lariam) Tablet

Adult dose is 250mg, one tablet taken once weekly

Child dosage is according to weight (minimum weight is usually 5kg)

Available to buy in the clinic or receive a private prescription

Mefloquine is unsuitable if you:

- Have had any mental health problems, epilepsy or fits now or in the past
- Have a heart conduction problem e.g. an irregular heart beat
- Have had any previous adverse reaction/allergy to mefloquine or quinine
- Are pregnant (1st trimester) – caution advised, seek advice
- Are breast feeding – caution advised, seek advice
- May become pregnant within 3 months of completing mefloquine.
- Have myasthenia gravis
- Caution is necessary if you have any liver or kidney function impairment
- It may also be appropriate to consider an alternative to mefloquine if you have a first degree relative with mental health problems or epilepsy.

Drug interactions:

Certain 'heart and blood pressure medicines', antihistamines, ranitidine, cimetidine, zyban®, chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, rifampicin, moxifloxacin, tricyclic antidepressants and phenothiazines.

Effectiveness:

Mefloquine is very effective at preventing severe (falciparum) malaria. For effective prevention you must take the full course of tablets. Can be taken up to three years in absence of side effects.

Side Effects:

- Possibly dizziness, depression, anxiety or sleep difficulties. Reactions most commonly occur within 2-3 weeks of starting the drug and may be worse if alcohol is taken around the same time as the mefloquine.
- You should immediately stop taking mefloquine and consult a doctor if you experience fits or unusual changes of mood
- May disturb fine co-ordination and balance and is unsuitable for pilots, those pursuing hazardous activities, diving and caution needed if travelling to altitude. If you are unable tolerate mefloquine you should change to a suitable alternative drug for malaria prevention.
- **No antimalarial drug is 100% effective**, careful anti-mosquito bite measures are important. Any flu like illness or fever (a week or more into your trip and up to a year after leaving a malarious area) needs reporting to a doctor and a malaria blood film sought urgently.

How to take mefloquine:

Mefloquine should be taken on the same day each week preferably with food. If you have not taken mefloquine before, we advise that you start 3 weeks prior to departure to check if it is tolerated. If you have taken it before without problems, at least 2 doses, a week apart, should be taken before departure. Continue to take mefloquine weekly whilst in the malarious area and for 4 weeks after leaving.

You must discuss your own particular needs and contraindications to mefloquine during your travel consultation or with your own doctor or nurse.