

# RIOCIQUAT (Adempas®) for PAH

## What is riociguat (Adempas®) used for?

Riociguat (Adempas®) is a prescription medicine used to treat **pulmonary arterial hypertension** (PAH).

PAH is defined by high blood pressure in the lungs resulting from the pulmonary arteries—the blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to the lungs—becoming narrowed or scarred.

## How does it work?

Riociguat (Adempas®) is a **soluble guanylate cyclase (sGC) stimulator** that lowers blood pressure in the lungs, making it easier for the heart to pump more effectively. Riociguat (Adempas®) helps increase sensitivity to nitric oxide in the pulmonary arteries to stimulate vasodilation (relaxation of the blood vessels).

Taking this medication may increase your ability to exercise and walk farther.

## What do I need to know?

Do not take riociguat (Adempas®) if you:

- Have increased pressure in your pulmonary circulation associated with scarring of the lungs, of unknown cause (idiopathic pulmonary pneumonia)
- Are allergic to riociguat (Adempas®) or any of its ingredients
- Have low blood pressure or develop severe low blood pressure when you start taking riociguat (Adempas®)
- Are breastfeeding
- Have severe liver or kidney disease
- Are taking medications for pulmonary arterial hypertension and/or erectile dysfunction, e.g. sildenafil (Revatio®, Viagra®), tadalafil (Adcirca®, Cialis®), vardenafil (Levitra®, Staxyn®)
- Are taking nitrates for angina or heart disease, e.g. nitroglycerin spray, tablets, patch, or ointments, isosorbide dinitrate or mononitrate.

Monitor your blood pressure.

**If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, contact your medical team right away.** This medication is known to cause serious birth defects.

## How should I take riociguat (Adempas®)?

Riociguat (Adempas®) is usually started at a 1 mg dose three times a day and slowly increased by 0.5 mg every 2 weeks until the desired dose is reached. The maximum dose is 2.5 mg three times daily (6–8 hours apart).

Riociguat (Adempas®) can be taken with or without food.

If you are transitioning from taking sildenafil or tadalafil, your medical team will tell you how long to wait before beginning to take riociguat (Adempas®).

## What are common side effects?

Some patients may experience side effects when taking this medication. If the side effects are severe or bothersome, please contact your medical team.

Side effects may include:

- Headaches
- Indigestion, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Low blood pressure or dizziness
- Swelling of the limbs
- Palpitations
- Nasal congestion or nosebleeds
- Anemia.

## Missed doses

If you miss a dose of riociguat (Adempas®), take your tablet as soon as you remember. Take the next dose at your regular time.

Do not take two doses at the same time.

**If treatment is interrupted for 3 days or more, contact your medical team before restarting riociguat (Adempas®).** You will likely need to restart at a lower dose and increase as directed by your medical team.

**Do not stop taking riociguat (Adempas®) unless advised by your medical team.**

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## Drug interactions

The following drugs and supplements may interact with riociguat (Adempas<sup>®</sup>):

- Some patients experience low blood pressure when taking riociguat (Adempas<sup>®</sup>) with **blood pressure medications**
- **Medications used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) and erectile dysfunction**, e.g. sildenafil (Viagra<sup>®</sup>, Revatio<sup>®</sup>), tadalafil (Adcirca<sup>®</sup>, Cialis<sup>®</sup>), and vardenafil (Levitra<sup>®</sup>, Staxyn<sup>®</sup>)
- **Medications used to treat fungal infections**, e.g. ketoconazole (Apo-Ketoconazole<sup>®</sup>), itraconazole (Sporanox<sup>®</sup>), and voriconazole (Vfend<sup>®</sup>)
- **Medications for the treatment of HIV infection**, e.g. darunavir (Prezista<sup>®</sup>), ritonavir (Norvir<sup>®</sup>), and nelfinavir (Viracept<sup>®</sup>)
- **Medications for seizure disorders**, e.g. phenytoin (Dilantin<sup>®</sup>) and carbamazepine (Tegretol<sup>®</sup>)
- Take **antacids**—proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) and potassium-competitive acid blockers (PCABs), e.g. aluminum hydroxide (Gaviscon<sup>®</sup>, Maalox<sup>®</sup>), calcium carbonate (Tums<sup>®</sup>), and magnesium hydroxide (Milk of Magnesia) —at least one hour before or after you take riociguat (Adempas<sup>®</sup>)
- **Smoking** can limit the effectiveness of riociguat (Adempas<sup>®</sup>)
- **Herbal supplements for depression**, e.g. St. John's Wort

This is not a comprehensive list of drug interactions.

**Tell your medical team about ALL the medicines you are taking**, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, minerals, natural supplements, and alternative medications.

**Speak to your medical team before starting any new medication.**

## When should I notify my pulmonary hypertension clinic or seek medical attention?

**Contact your medical team or seek medical attention immediately** if you develop:

- Dizziness, light-headedness, or passing out
- Nosebleeds
- Coughing up blood

Symptoms of worsening pulmonary hypertension:

- Difficulty breathing
- Fluid retention or weight gain
- Dizziness or passing out

An allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the mouth, tongue, face, or throat
- Itching
- Rash
- Difficulty breathing.

**If you take more than your prescribed dose**, contact your medical team immediately, even if you feel well.

## Additional information

- Store out of reach of children.
- Store at room temperature (15°–30° C).
- Do not use expired medication.
- Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of medications you no longer require. Do not throw away any medication or flush it down the toilet.

For more information, please see [the full product monograph](#).



PULMONARY HYPERTENSION  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

L'ASSOCIATION D'HYPERTENSION  
PULMONAIRE DU CANADA

To learn more about pulmonary arterial hypertension, please visit [www.phacanada.ca](http://www.phacanada.ca)

The information provided in this resource is for educational purposes only. Please speak with your medical team to establish a personalized treatment plan and discuss any changes to your lifestyle or course of treatment.