

# TIKOSYN (DOFETILIDE) LOADING

## Atrial Fibrillation

Afib is the most common abnormal arrhythmia a person can experience. When in Afib, instead of your heart beating in an organized manner, there are approximately 300-400 signals a minute in the upper chamber (atria) bouncing around in an uncontrolled and unorganized manner.

Your doctor may prescribe a medication called an antiarrhythmic for your Afib. Tikosyn, also called dofetilide, is an antiarrhythmic medication that can help with your Afib.

## What is Tikosyn?

Tikosyn is designed to keep you in sinus (or normal) rhythm or more specifically, keep you out of Afib.

- Tikosyn is successful at keeping your heart out of Afib, for approximately 60% of the people who are started on it.
- It is successful for a period of 5-10 years.

## What are possible side effects?

Most patients tolerate Tikosyn well with little side effects, but you may experience:

- Headache
  - Dizziness
  - Nausea
  - Change in the electrical pattern of your heart
  - Chest pain
  - Passing out
- If you experience chest pain, passing out or almost pass out, contact your doctor's office immediately

## What is the process for starting on Tikosyn?

Starting on Tikosyn requires a 3-day hospital admission. During your hospital stay, your heart rhythm will be evaluated after each dose of medication. This is done because the medication

changes how the electricity in your heart conducts. For this reason, the doctor may adjust your dose based on evaluation of your ECG.

If the medication changes the electrical pattern in your heart too much, you are at risk for life-threatening arrhythmias. In this situation, the doctor will stop the medication and unfortunately you cannot continue with taking it.

## What can I expect?

Once you decide to move forward with Tikosyn loading, your doctor will order the hospital admission. After your insurance authorizes the admission a scheduler will contact you with a date for admission.

Once you have an admission date scheduled, your nurse will mail you a letter, outlining any instructions for your admission.

You will also receive a call from your nurse, during the week prior to your admission to review your instructions.

You will be required to do a lab draw 3-4 days prior to your admission to assess your electrolytes.

If any of your electrolytes are low, you may be advised to take supplements such as potassium or magnesium to balance your electrolytes prior to admission.

## Why might Tikosyn not work for me?

There are three reasons that Tikosyn may not be right for you. They include:

- a) You do not tolerate the medication due to side effects
- b) The medication changes the electrical pattern in your heart too much. If this happens, you are at risk for life-threatening arrhythmias. For this reason, this medication cannot be continued.
- c) The medication is unsuccessful at keeping you out of Afib.