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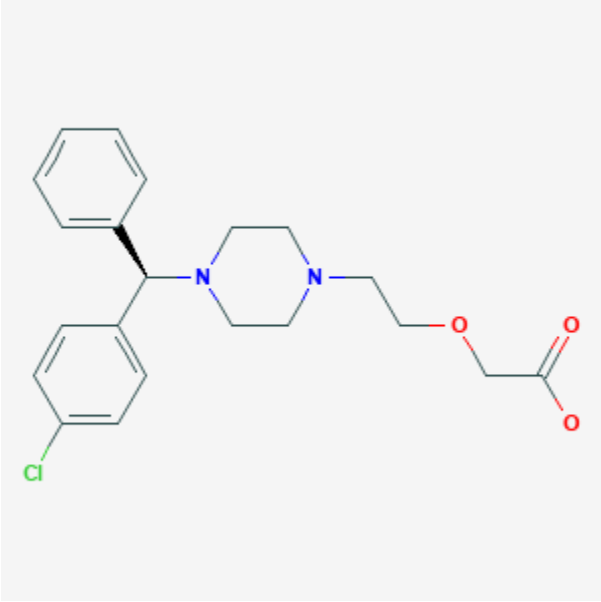
Levocetirizine

Revised: October 31, 2018.

CASRN: 130018-77-8



Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

Levocetirizine is the *R*-enantiomer of cetirizine. Small occasional doses of levocetirizine are probably acceptable during breastfeeding. Larger doses or more prolonged use may cause drowsiness and other effects in the infant or decrease the milk supply, particularly in combination with a sympathomimetic such as pseudoephedrine or before lactation is well established. The British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology recommends cetirizine, the racemic form of the drug, at its lowest dose as a preferred choice if an antihistamine is required during breastfeeding.[1]

Drug Levels

Maternal Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Infant Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Effects in Breastfed Infants

Relevant published information on levocetirizine was not found as of the revision date. In one telephone follow-up study, mothers reported irritability and colicky symptoms in 10% of infants exposed to various antihistamines, and drowsiness was reported in 1.6% of infants. None of the reactions required medical attention.[2]

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

Antihistamines in relatively high doses given by injection can decrease basal serum prolactin in nonlactating women and in early postpartum women.[3][4] However, suckling-induced prolactin secretion is not affected by antihistamine pretreatment of postpartum mothers.[3] Whether lower oral doses of levocetirizine have the same effect on serum prolactin or whether the effects on prolactin have any consequences on breastfeeding success have not been studied. The prolactin level in a mother with established lactation may not affect her ability to breastfeed.

Alternate Drugs to Consider

Desloratadine, Fexofenadine, Loratadine

References

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3. Messinis IE, Souvatzoglou A, Fais N, Lolis D. Histamine H1 receptor participation in the control of prolactin secretion in postpartum. J Endocrinol Investig. 1985;8:143-6. PubMed PMID: 3928731.
4. Pontiroli AE, De Castro e Silva E, Mazzoleni F et al. The effect of histamine and H1 and H2 receptors on prolactin and luteinizing hormone release in humans: sex differences and the role of stress. J Clin Endocrinol Metab. 1981;52:924-8. PubMed PMID: 7228996.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Levocetirizine

CAS Registry Number

130018-77-8

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Antihistamines