

Baclofen is a medication that is used to treat muscle spasticity. It works by reducing the activity of nerve cells in the spinal cord that cause muscles to spasm. Baclofen is a GABA agonist, which means it binds to and activates GABA receptors in the brain and spinal cord, leading to an overall decrease in nerve cell and therefore muscle activity.

Baclofen is primarily used to treat spasticity caused by conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, and certain types of stroke. It can be used in the management of dystonia, although there are other more effective treatments than oral medications.

It can also be used in the management of trigeminal neuralgia where first line treatments have been ineffective.

The most common side effects of baclofen include drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, headache, and nausea. In rare cases, it can cause seizures or hallucinations. Patients should be monitored for signs of depression, suicidal thoughts, and worsening of spasticity.

Baclofen should not be stopped abruptly, as this can cause withdrawal symptoms such as confusion, hallucinations, seizures, and increased spasticity. Therefore, patients should always consult their consultant or GP before discontinuing this medication.

In addition, because baclofen can cause drowsiness, patients should avoid driving or operating heavy machinery until they know how the medication affects them.

Regular monitoring of liver function, kidney function, and blood counts may be necessary for patients taking baclofen.

The dose of the medication may also need to be adjusted periodically to ensure it is providing optimal relief of spasticity without causing significant side effects.