

## Cholinesterase Inhibitors (ChEI)

Medication*	Initial Oral Dose (mg)	Dosing Frequency	Formulation	Titration Dose (mg) and Schedule	Average Total per day (mg)	Common Side Effects	Medication Administration
donepezil (Aricept)	2.5 to 5	daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oral</li> <li>rapid dissolving tablets (RDT)</li> </ul>	2.5 to 5  6 weeks before dose increase	10  (5 mg if person weighs < 50kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nausea</li> <li>diarrhea</li> <li>muscle cramps</li> <li>insomnia/vivid dreams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>swallow whole</li> <li>dissolve RDT in mouth</li> </ul>
rivastigmine (Exelon)	1.5	bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capsule</li> <li>oral liquid</li> </ul>	1.5  2 weeks before dose increase	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with food</li> <li>measure liquid doses carefully</li> <li>swallow whole</li> <li>do not crush or open capsules</li> </ul>
	5 (patch)	daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>patch</li> </ul>	5  4 weeks before dose increase	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above</li> <li>less GI side effects with patch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove old patch before applying new patch.</li> <li>rotate site</li> </ul>
galantamine (Reminyl ER)	8	daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extended release capsules</li> </ul>	8  4 weeks before dose increase	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>morning dose</li> <li>swallow whole</li> <li>do not crush or open capsules</li> </ul>

\*Please consult with the product monograph for more detailed information.

## 1. Key Messages/Considerations: Cholinesterase Inhibitors (ChEI)

- These medications do not appear to be effective in reducing significant pre-existing agitation, psychosis or aggression.
- CCCDTD4 (2012):
  - “The combination of CIs (*sic*) and memantine is logical, but an additive benefit has not been conclusively demonstrated”;
  - “There is insufficient evidence for or against **cholinesterase inhibitors**, memantine, SSRIs, or trazodone as first-line therapy for neuropsychiatric symptoms”
- First line intervention for psychosis in dementia (major neurocognitive disorder) due to Parkinson’s Disease or Lewy Body.
- Monitor and report: weight loss, loss of appetite, heart rate < 50 bpm, seizures, breathing problems, fainting, anxiety or restlessness
- Relative contraindications: Hepatic or renal disease, Peptic ulcer disease, Significant bradycardia or AV block, Significant bronchospastic Disease, History of seizure;
- Reassess need for continued therapy in late stage illness;
- PharmaCare Special Authority required. See link for information about current [Alzheimer Drug Therapy Initiative](#) applications
- Rivastigmine conversion: < 6mg orally = 5mg patch, ≥ 6mg orally = 10mg patch
- Avoid / minimize concurrent use of anticholinergic agents (e.g., oxybutinin).

## 2. References and other medication information:

- Canadian Consensus Conference on Diagnosis and Treatment of Dementia (CCCDTD4), 2012, retrieved July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 online from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3516356/> .
- Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition. (2009) Hogrefe and Huber.
- CPS - Compendium of Pharmaceutical and Specialities (2013).
- Lexicomp online drug information ([www.online.lexi.com](http://www.online.lexi.com)).
- P.I.E.C.E.S. Psychotropic Template (2009), retrieved online June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from [http://www.piecescanada.com/pdf/Psychotropic\\_Template\\_Jan09.pdf](http://www.piecescanada.com/pdf/Psychotropic_Template_Jan09.pdf)
- Stahl, Steven M (2007) Essential Psychopharmacology: The Prescriber’s Guide. Cambridge University Press.
- Tool on Pharmacological Treatment of Behavioral Symptoms of Dementia in Long Term Care Facilities for Older Adults, based on: Canadian Coalition for Seniors’ Mental Health (CCSMH) National Guidelines: The Assessment and Treatment of Mental Health Issues in Long Term Care Homes, retrieved online May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from: [http://www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmh\\_ltc\\_meds\\_front.pdf](http://www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmh_ltc_meds_front.pdf).