

## Generic Name: Rufinamide

## Trade Name: Banzel

### What is it used for?

- Treatment of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, including drop attacks and convulsive seizures

### How long does the medicine take to work?

- 2-3 days

### What are the important safety concerns?

- When first starting the medicine, your child may be slightly drowsy and dizzy.
- Only adjust the dosage as recommended by your health care provider. They will usually increase this medication slowly to avoid side effects. Never increase the dosage more than **once per week** unless directed otherwise.
- Once you have started with one brand of the medication stay with it. Avoid switching between different brands.
- Check with your pharmacist before taking herbal medications and/or over-the-counter medications. They may have adverse effects if taken with anti-seizure medications.
- Do not stop this medication suddenly because this could result in seizures.
- It is important to keep a record of your child's seizures and side effects to determine how well they are responding to the medication.  
**Please bring these records to all your clinic appointments**
- **Always bring all your child's medications to every clinic appointment**
- Children with Familial Short QT syndrome or a family history of short QT syndrome, or have a history of short QT interval should NOT take Rufinamide

### Does my child need blood work or any other tests before starting this medication?

- An ECG may be done prior to starting this medication to check your child's heart rhythm. Your healthcare provider will decide when this is necessary and may even want to repeat the test in the future.
- A blood test may be done before starting this medication to check your child's liver function and blood counts. Your health care provider will decide when this is necessary.

### What are the possible side effects?

Your child may have some of the following side effects while taking Rufinamide. Often these will resolve after your child has been on the medication for a few weeks. Please contact your healthcare provider if your child continues to have any of these side effects, especially if they are bothering them.

- Dizziness\*
- Fatigue\*
- Nausea\*
- Headache\*
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness\*
- Decreased Appetite\*
- Coordination problems\*
- Abdominal pain
- Increase in colds
- Vision problems
- Nose bleeds

\*more common side effects

### When do I call my health care provider?

Call your health care provider or go to your nearest emergency department if you are concerned about your child in any way. With Rufinamide, the following would be of concern:

- Swelling of face, eyes, lips or tongue
- Trouble swallowing or breathing
- Unexplained fever
- \*Rash or Hives
- Increase in seizure frequency and duration
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Blood in urine
- Unusual behaviours
- \*If any of these occur together (e.g. rash + fever + facial swelling + turning yellow), especially after being on Rufinamide for 4 weeks

### How do I give the medication?

- Rufinamide is given by mouth. It **should be given with food** to improve how the body absorbs the drug. Not giving with food actually decreases the amount of drug available to your child's body.
- Tablets can be given whole, as half tablets, or crushed.
- Do not give your child an antacid medication at least one hour prior or two hours after this medication.
- Give your child the medication as close to the same time as possible each day and only the amount prescribed.
- If your child misses a dose, give the dose as soon as you remember or are able to. If the next dose of the medicine is due in less than 4 hours, do **not** give the dose you forgot. Instead, give the next dose a little bit earlier and then the dose after that at its regular time. **Never give two doses of Rufinamide at once.**
- If your child vomits within 30 minutes of taking the medication, repeat the dose.
- If your child vomits after 30 minutes of taking the medication, do not repeat the dose.

**What other anti-seizure medications may alter the effectiveness of Rufinamide?**

Rufinamide increases: Phenytoin (Dilantin), Phenobarbital

Rufinamide decreases: Carbamazepine (Tegretol), Lamotrigine (Lamictal)

Valproate (Epival, Depakene) increases Rufinamide

Phenytoin (Dilantin), Phenobarbital, Carbamazepine (Tegretol), Primidone (Mysoline),

Vigabatrin (Sabril) decreases Rufinamide

\*It is always important you tell your healthcare provider and pharmacist about all the medications your child is taking including over the counter and/ or herbal medications

**Are there other special things to know about this medication?**

Rufinamide contains lactose.

Rufinamide may make hormonal contraceptives (birth control) less effective. In other words, it may make it not work properly.

Please discuss further with your health care provider if your child has a lactose problem or is on birth control.

**What are the available formulations?**

- Tablet 100 mg
- Tablet 400 mg
- Tablet 200 mg
- Talk to your pharmacist if you need a liquid preparation made.