

## What You Need To Know: Allergy Medication Ketotifen



**Of particular interest in South Texas** - Ketotifen is an anti-allergy medication that is also used to minimize the frequency and severity of asthma attacks. Have we gotten your attention yet? It is a mast cell stabilizer and H1 antihistamine drug that was developed just shy of 50 years ago. When you are exposed to an allergen, specialized cells called mast cells react by releasing chemicals like histamine, cytokines, and other mediators that cause inflammation and your body's allergic reaction. Ketotifen acts by two major mechanisms: (1) blocking the action of histamine and your body's reaction to it, and (2) stabilizing mast cells and preventing them from releasing its chemical mediators. These two actions reduce reactions such as the runny nose, sneezing, congestion, itching, and other allergy-related traits; in short, the misery we are all too familiar with.

Ketotifen is commonly used in Canada, Europe, and Mexico to treat various allergies and asthma and but is only FDA approved as an ophthalmic (eye) drop in the United States, thus making it commercially unavailable. Oral (by mouth) ketotifen has not been approved in the US, but not because it's dangerous. It's because it was never submitted to the FDA for approval. And why was it not submitted? Again, not because it's dangerous. At the time, the manufacturer did not feel that there was enough of a market to justify the time and expense of

an FDA submission when there were so many other H1 antihistamines available both over the counter and with prescription. It's that simple.

Just some of the conditions Ketotifen is used for include:

- food allergy
- asthma
- allergic rhinitis
- mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS)
- exercise-induced or cold -induced urticaria (hives and itching)
- allergic conjunctivitis
- atopic dermatitis
- chronic urticaria

It is regularly cited by mast cell patients as one of the more effective meds for managing mast cell disease, especially food intolerance. Ketotifen lasts longer and works faster than diphenhydramine, found in Benadryl and Zyrtec, because of the rate of absorption and other chemical reactions with the receptors in the body.

So how do you get ketotifen in the US? You can import it from abroad for personal use as a mast cell patient, but there is an easier way: ketotifen capsules can be formulated right here in Victoria in our PCAB (pharmacy compounding accreditation board) accredited lab to the specification written just for you by your provider. The most common strength for capsules is 1mg twice daily for adults, but some providers use much higher doses, dependent upon the condition treated, even going upwards of 20 mg per day in some instances. It can be taken in conjunction with other allergy medications depending on the Ketotifen dosage. It has been used in the pediatric population as well.

Let Central Drug become a part of your allergy relief team! We are happy to contact your prescriber about Ketotifen's potential to help your particular condition.