

Diclofenac tablets only available on prescription

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Key messages

- You can no longer buy diclofenac tablets without a prescription.
- There is a small risk that diclofenac tablets may cause heart problems in some people. Your prescriber can tell you if diclofenac tablets are suitable for you.
- If you have recently bought diclofenac tablets without a prescription and continue to need pain relief, speak to your prescriber or pharmacist. They can advise you on suitable alternatives. There is no problem if you wish to stop taking the tablets in the meantime.
- If you have been prescribed diclofenac tablets do not stop taking them. Speak to your prescriber or pharmacist at your next routine visit if you have concerns about the treatment.
- This information does not apply to diclofenac-containing substances that are applied to the skin (eg gels for relieving joint and muscle pain). These will still be available without a prescription.



What is diclofenac and what does it do?

Diclofenac is medicine used to relieve pain, reduce swelling, and ease inflammation. It is used to treat arthritis and other conditions that cause pain and inflammation.

Why can I no longer buy diclofenac tablets without a prescription?

As with any medicine, diclofenac tablets may cause side effects in some people. Diclofenac tablets can cause heart-related side effects such as heart attack and stroke. These are serious side effects but the chance that they may happen is very low.

The benefits of diclofenac tablets still outweigh the risk of these side effects for some people. A prescriber can review your medical history and information about the other medicines you are taking. They can also carry out tests to decide if diclofenac tablets are suitable for you. For these reasons, you can no longer buy diclofenac tablets without a prescription.

What should I do if I've bought diclofenac tablets without a prescription?

If you have recently bought diclofenac tablets without a prescription and continue to need pain relief, speak to your prescriber or pharmacist at your next routine visit. They can advise you on suitable alternatives. There is no problem if you wish to stop taking the tablets in the meantime.

What should I do if I've been prescribed diclofenac tablets?

If you have been prescribed diclofenac tablets, there is no need to stop taking them. Continue to take it as instructed by your prescriber. Your medical history and any tests will have been assessed by your prescriber before they prescribed you the tablets. Speak to your prescriber at your next routine visit if you have any concerns. They may recommend an alternative treatment if needed.