

## NUCYNTA® (tapentadol)

### INDICATIONS AND USAGE

NUCYNTA (tapentadol) tablets are indicated for the management of acute pain severe enough to require an opioid analgesic and for which alternative treatments are inadequate in adults.

#### Limitations of Use

Because of the risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse with opioids, even at recommended doses, reserve NUCYNTA tablets for use in patients for whom alternative treatment options (eg, non-opioid analgesics or opioid combination products):

- Have not been tolerated, or are not expected to be tolerated
- Have not provided adequate analgesia, or are not expected to provide adequate analgesia

### CONTRAINDICATIONS:

NUCYNTA tablets are contraindicated in patients with:

- Significant respiratory depression
- Acute or severe bronchial asthma in an unmonitored setting or in the absence of resuscitative equipment
- Known or suspected gastrointestinal obstruction, including suspected paralytic ileus
- Hypersensitivity to tapentadol (eg, anaphylaxis, angioedema) or to any other ingredients of the product
- Concurrent use of monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) or use of MAOIs within the last 14 days

### WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS:

#### Addiction, Abuse, and Misuse

NUCYNTA tablets contain tapentadol, a Schedule II controlled substance. As an opioid, NUCYNTA tablets expose users to the risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse.

Although the risk of addiction in any individual is unknown, it can occur in patients appropriately prescribed NUCYNTA tablets. Addiction can occur at recommended dosages and if the drug is misused or abused.

Assess each patient's risk for opioid addiction, abuse, or misuse prior to prescribing NUCYNTA tablets and monitor all patients receiving NUCYNTA tablets for the development of these behaviors and conditions. Risks are increased in patients with a personal or family history of substance abuse (including drug or alcohol abuse or addiction) or mental illness (eg, major depression). The potential for these risks should not, however, prevent the proper management of pain in any given patient. Patients at increased risk may be prescribed opioids such as NUCYNTA tablets, but use in such patients necessitates intensive counseling about the risks and proper use of NUCYNTA tablets along with intensive monitoring for signs of addiction, abuse, and misuse.

Opioids are sought by drug abusers and people with addiction disorders and are subject to criminal diversion. Consider these risks when prescribing or dispensing NUCYNTA tablets. Strategies to reduce these risks include prescribing the drug in the smallest appropriate quantity and advising the patient on the proper disposal of unused drug. Contact local state professional licensing board or state controlled substances authority for information on how to prevent and detect abuse or diversion of this product.

#### Opioid Analgesic Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS)

To ensure that the benefits of opioid analgesics outweigh the risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has required a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) for these products. Under the requirements of the REMS, drug companies with approved opioid analgesic products must make REMS-compliant education programs available to healthcare providers. Healthcare providers are strongly encouraged to do all of the following:

- Complete a REMS-compliant education program offered by an accredited provider of continuing education (CE) or another education program that includes all the elements of the FDA Education Blueprint for Health Care Providers Involved in the Management or Support of Patients with Pain
- Discuss the safe use, serious risks, and proper storage and disposal of opioid analgesics with patients and/or their caregivers every time these medicines are prescribed. The Patient Counseling Guide (PCG) can be obtained at this link: [www.fda.gov/OpioidAnalgesicREMSPCG](http://www.fda.gov/OpioidAnalgesicREMSPCG)
- Emphasize to patients and their caregivers the importance of reading the Medication Guide that they will receive from their pharmacist every time an opioid analgesic is dispensed to them
- Consider using other tools to improve patient, household, and community safety, such as patient-prescriber agreements that reinforce patient- prescriber responsibilities

To obtain further information on the opioid analgesic REMS and for a list of accredited REMS CME/CE, call 1-800-503-0784, or log on to [www.opioidanalgesicrems.com](http://www.opioidanalgesicrems.com). The FDA Blueprint can be found at [www.fda.gov/OpioidAnalgesicREMSBlueprint](http://www.fda.gov/OpioidAnalgesicREMSBlueprint).

#### Life-Threatening Respiratory Depression

Serious, life-threatening, or fatal respiratory depression has been reported with the use of opioids, even when used as recommended. Respiratory depression, if not immediately recognized and treated, may lead to respiratory arrest and death. Management of respiratory depression may include close observation, supportive measures, and use of opioid antagonists, depending on the patient's clinical status. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) retention from opioid-induced respiratory depression can exacerbate the sedating effects of opioids.

While serious, life-threatening, or fatal respiratory depression can occur at any time during the use of NUCYNTA tablets, the risk is greatest during the initiation of therapy or following a dosage increase. Monitor patients closely for respiratory depression, especially within the first 24-72 hours of initiating therapy with and following dosage increases of NUCYNTA tablets.

To reduce the risk of respiratory depression, proper dosing and titration of NUCYNTA tablets are essential. Overestimating the NUCYNTA tablets dosage when converting patients from another opioid product can result in a fatal overdose with the first dose.

Accidental ingestion of even one dose of NUCYNTA tablets, especially by children, can result in respiratory depression and death due to an overdose of tapentadol.

Educate patients and caregivers on how to recognize respiratory depression and emphasize the importance of calling 911 or getting emergency medical help right away in the event of a known or suspected overdose.

Opioids can cause sleep-related breathing disorders, including central sleep apnea (CSA) and sleep-related hypoxemia. Opioid use increases the risk of CSA in a dose-dependent fashion. In patients who present with CSA, consider decreasing the opioid dosage using best practices for opioid taper.

#### Patient Access to Naloxone for the Emergency Treatment of Opioid Overdose:

Discuss the availability of naloxone for the emergency treatment of opioid overdose with the patient and caregiver and assess the potential need for access to naloxone, both when initiating and renewing treatment with NUCYNTA tablets. Inform patients and caregivers about the various ways to obtain naloxone as permitted by individual state naloxone dispensing and prescribing requirements or guidelines (eg, by prescription, directly from a pharmacist, or as part of a community-based program). Educate patients and caregivers on how to recognize respiratory depression and emphasize the importance of calling 911 or getting emergency medical help, even if naloxone is administered

Consider prescribing naloxone, based on the patient's risk factors for overdose, such as concomitant use of CNS depressants, a history of opioid use disorder, or prior opioid overdose. The presence of risk factors for overdose should not prevent the proper management of pain in any given patient. Also consider prescribing naloxone if the patient has household members (including children) or other close contacts at risk for accidental ingestion or overdose. If naloxone is prescribed, educate patients and caregivers on how to treat with naloxone.

#### Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

Prolonged use of NUCYNTA tablets during pregnancy can result in withdrawal in the neonate. Neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, unlike opioid withdrawal syndrome in adults, may be life-threatening if not recognized and treated, and requires management according to protocols developed by neonatology experts. Observe newborns for signs of neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome and manage accordingly. Advise pregnant women using opioids for a prolonged period of the risk of neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome and ensure that appropriate treatment will be available.

#### Risks From Concomitant Use With Benzodiazepines or Other CNS Depressants

Profound sedation, respiratory depression, coma, and death may result from the concomitant use of NUCYNTA tablets with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants (eg, non-benzodiazepine sedatives/hypnotics, anxiolytics, tranquilizers, muscle relaxants, general anesthetics, antipsychotics, other opioids, alcohol). Because of these risks, reserve concomitant prescribing of these drugs for use in patients for whom alternative treatment options are inadequate.

Observational studies have demonstrated that concomitant use of opioid analgesics and benzodiazepines increases the risk of drug-related mortality compared to use of opioid analgesics alone. Because of similar pharmacological properties, it is reasonable to expect similar risk with the concomitant use of other CNS depressant drugs with opioid analgesics.

If the decision is made to prescribe a benzodiazepine or other CNS depressant concomitantly with an opioid analgesic, prescribe the lowest effective dosages and minimum durations of concomitant use. In patients already receiving an opioid analgesic, prescribe a lower initial dose of the benzodiazepine or other CNS depressant than indicated in the absence of an opioid, and titrate based on clinical response. If an opioid analgesic is initiated in a patient already taking a benzodiazepine or other CNS depressant, prescribe a lower initial dose of the opioid analgesic, and titrate based on clinical response. Follow patients closely for signs and symptoms of respiratory depression and sedation. If concomitant use is warranted, consider prescribing naloxone for the emergency treatment of opioid overdose.

Advise both patients and caregivers about the risks of respiratory depression and sedation when NUCYNTA tablets are used with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants (including alcohol and illicit drugs). Advise patients not to drive or operate heavy machinery until the effects of concomitant use of the benzodiazepine or other CNS depressant have been determined. Screen patients for risk of substance use disorders, including opioid abuse and misuse, and warn them of the risk for overdose and death associated with the use of additional CNS depressants including alcohol and illicit drugs.

#### Life-Threatening Respiratory Depression in Patients With Chronic Pulmonary Disease or in Elderly, Cachectic, or Debilitated Patients

The use of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with acute or severe bronchial asthma in an unmonitored setting or in the absence of resuscitative equipment is contraindicated.

**Patients with Chronic Pulmonary Disease:** NUCYNTA tablets-treated patients with significant chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or cor pulmonale, and those with a substantially decreased respiratory reserve, hypoxia, hypercapnia, or pre-existing respiratory depression are at increased risk of decreased respiratory drive including apnea, even at recommended dosages of NUCYNTA tablets.

**Elderly, Cachectic, or Debilitated Patients:** Life-threatening respiratory depression is more likely to occur in elderly, cachectic, or debilitated patients because they may have altered pharmacokinetics or altered clearance compared to younger, healthier patients.

Monitor such patients closely, particularly when initiating and titrating NUCYNTA tablets and when NUCYNTA tablets are given concomitantly with other drugs that depress respiration. Alternatively, consider the use of non-opioid analgesics in these patients.

#### Serotonin Syndrome With Concomitant Use of Serotonergic Drugs

Cases of serotonin syndrome, a potentially life-threatening condition, have been reported during concurrent use of tapentadol with serotonergic drugs. Serotonergic drugs include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), triptans, 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists, drugs that affect the serotonergic neurotransmitter system (eg, mirtazapine, trazodone, tramadol), certain muscle relaxants (ie, cyclobenzaprine, metaxalone), and drugs that impair metabolism of serotonin (including MAO inhibitors, both those intended to treat psychiatric disorders and also others, such as linezolid and intravenous methylene blue). This may occur within the recommended dosage range.

Serotonin syndrome symptoms may include mental-status changes (eg, agitation, hallucinations, coma), autonomic instability (eg, tachycardia, labile blood pressure, hyperthermia), neuromuscular aberrations (eg, hyperreflexia, incoordination) and/or gastrointestinal symptoms (eg, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) and can be fatal. The onset of symptoms generally occurs within several hours to a few days of concomitant use, but may occur later than that. Discontinue NUCYNTA tablets if serotonin syndrome is suspected.

#### Adrenal Insufficiency

Cases of adrenal insufficiency have been reported with opioid use, more often following greater than one month of use. Presentation of adrenal insufficiency may include non-specific symptoms and signs including nausea, vomiting, anorexia, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, and low blood pressure. If adrenal insufficiency is suspected, confirm the diagnosis with diagnostic testing as soon as possible. If adrenal insufficiency is diagnosed, treat with physiologic replacement doses of corticosteroids. Wean the patient off of the opioid to allow adrenal function to recover and continue corticosteroid treatment until adrenal function recovers. Other opioids may be tried as some cases reported use of a different opioid without recurrence of adrenal insufficiency. The information available does not identify any particular opioids as being more likely to be associated with adrenal insufficiency.

#### Severe Hypotension

NUCYNTA tablets may cause severe hypotension including orthostatic hypotension and syncope in ambulatory patients. There is increased risk in patients whose ability to maintain blood pressure has already been compromised by a reduced blood volume or concurrent administration of certain CNS depressant drugs (eg, phenothiazines or general anesthetics). Monitor these patients for signs of hypotension after initiating or titrating the dosage of NUCYNTA tablets. In patients with circulatory shock, NUCYNTA tablets may cause vasodilation that can further reduce cardiac output and blood pressure. Avoid the use of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with circulatory shock.

#### Risks of Use in Patients With Increased Intracranial Pressure, Brain Tumors, Head Injury, or Impaired Consciousness

In patients who may be susceptible to the intracranial effects of CO<sub>2</sub> retention (eg, those with evidence of increased intracranial pressure or brain tumors), NUCYNTA tablets may reduce respiratory drive, and the resultant CO<sub>2</sub> retention can further increase intracranial pressure. Monitor such patients for signs of sedation and respiratory depression, particularly when initiating therapy with NUCYNTA tablets.

Opioids may also obscure the clinical course in a patient with a head injury. Avoid the use of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with impaired consciousness or coma.

#### Risks of Use in Patients With Gastrointestinal Conditions

NUCYNTA tablets are contraindicated in patients with known or suspected gastrointestinal obstruction, including paralytic ileus.

The tapentadol in NUCYNTA tablets may cause spasm of the sphincter of Oddi. Opioids may cause increases in serum amylase. Monitor patients with biliary tract disease, including acute pancreatitis for worsening symptoms.

#### Increased Risk of Seizures in Patients With Seizure Disorders

The tapentadol in NUCYNTA tablets may increase the frequency of seizures in patients with seizure disorders, and may increase the risk of seizures occurring in other clinical settings associated with seizures. Monitor patients with a history of seizure disorders for worsened seizure control during NUCYNTA tablets therapy.

#### Withdrawal

Do not abruptly discontinue NUCYNTA tablets in a patient physically dependent on opioids. When discontinuing NUCYNTA tablets in a physically dependent patient, gradually taper the dosage. Rapid tapering of tapentadol in a patient discontinuing dependent on opioids may lead to a withdrawal syndrome and return of pain.

Additionally, avoid the use of mixed agonist/antagonist (eg, pentazocine, nalbuphine, and buprenorphine) or partial agonist (eg, buprenorphine) analgesics in patients who are receiving a full opioid agonist analgesic, including NUCYNTA tablets. In these patients, mixed agonist/antagonist and partial agonist analgesics may reduce the analgesic effect and/or precipitate withdrawal symptoms.

#### Risks of Driving and Operating Machinery

NUCYNTA tablets may impair the mental or physical abilities needed to perform potentially hazardous activities such as driving a car or operating machinery. Warn patients not to drive or operate dangerous machinery unless they are tolerant to the effects of NUCYNTA tablets and know how they will react to the medication.

#### Interactions With Alcohol, Other Opioids, and Drugs of Abuse

Due to its mu-opioid agonist activity, NUCYNTA tablets may be expected to have additive effects when used in conjunction with alcohol, other opioids, or illicit drugs that cause central nervous system depression, respiratory depression, hypotension, and profound sedation, coma or death. Instruct patients that to consume alcoholic beverages or use prescription or non-prescription products containing alcohol, other opioids, or drugs of abuse while on NUCYNTA tablets therapy.

#### Risk of Toxicity in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

A study with NUCYNTA tablets in subjects with hepatic impairment showed higher serum concentrations of tapentadol than in those with normal hepatic function. Avoid use of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with severe hepatic impairment. Reduce the dose of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with moderate hepatic impairment. Closely monitor patients with moderate hepatic impairment for respiratory and central nervous system depression when receiving NUCYNTA tablets.

#### Risk of Toxicity in Patients With Renal Impairment

Use of NUCYNTA tablets in patients with severe renal impairment is not recommended due to accumulation of a metabolite formed by glucuronidation of tapentadol. The clinical relevance of the elevated metabolite is not known.

### ADVERSE REACTIONS:

In clinical studies, the most common (≥10%) adverse reactions were nausea, dizziness, vomiting, and somnolence.

See full [Prescribing Information](#), including [Boxed Warning on Addiction, Abuse and Misuse and other serious risks](#), [see also Prescribing information or at \[www.fda.gov/IRJ\]\(http://www.fda.gov/IRJ\)](#).

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

**WARNING: ADDICTION, ABUSE, AND MISUSE; RISK EVALUATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGY (REMS); LIFE-THREATENING RESPIRATORY DEPRESSION; ACCIDENTAL INGESTION; NEONATAL OPIOID WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME; and RISKS FROM CONCOMITANT USE WITH BENZODIAZEPINES OR OTHER CNS DEPRESSANTS**

#### Addiction, Abuse, and Misuse

NUCYNTA tablets expose patients and other users to the risks of opioid addiction, abuse, and misuse, which can lead to overdose and death. Assess each patient's risk prior to prescribing NUCYNTA tablets, and monitor all patients regularly for the development of these behaviors and conditions.

#### Opioid Analgesic Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS)

To ensure that the benefits of opioid analgesics outweigh the risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has required a REMS for these products. Under the requirements of the REMS, drug companies with approved opioid analgesic products must make REMS-compliant education programs available to healthcare providers. Healthcare providers are strongly encouraged to

- complete a REMS-compliant education program,
- counsel patients and/or their caregivers, with every prescription, on safe use, serious risks, storage, and disposal of these products,
- emphasize to patients and their caregivers the importance of reading the Medication Guide every time it is provided by their pharmacist, and
- consider other tools to improve patient, household, and community safety.

#### Life-Threatening Respiratory Depression

Serious, life-threatening, or fatal respiratory depression may occur with use of NUCYNTA tablets. Monitor for respiratory depression, especially during initiation of NUCYNTA tablets or following a dose increase.

#### Accidental Ingestion

Accidental ingestion of even one dose of NUCYNTA tablets, especially by children, can result in a fatal overdose of tapentadol.

#### Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

Prolonged use of NUCYNTA tablets during pregnancy can result in neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, which may be life-threatening if not recognized and treated, and requires management according to protocols developed by neonatology experts. If opioid use is required for a prolonged period in a pregnant woman, advise the patient of the risk of neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome and ensure that appropriate treatment will be available.

#### Risks From Concomitant Use With Benzodiazepines or Other CNS Depressants

Concomitant use of opioids with benzodiazepines or other central nervous system (CNS) depressants, including alcohol, may result in profound sedation, respiratory depression, coma, and death.

- Reserve concomitant prescribing of NUCYNTA tablets and benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants for use in patients for whom alternative treatment options are inadequate.
- Limit dosages and durations to the minimum required.
- Follow patients for signs and symptoms of respiratory depression and sedation.