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Parcopa (Carbidopa-Levodopa Orally Disintegrating Tablets)

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Background
In August 2004, Schwarz Pharma received the FDA’s approval of Parcopa (carbidopa-levodopa orally disintegrating tablets) for treating Parkinson’s disease. It is similar to immediate release Sinemet and the generic equivalents but differs in its unique dissolving formulation. The new RapiTab dosage form dissolves rapidly on the tongue without the need for water. This is especially useful for Parkinson’s patients who often have difficulty swallowing.

In a 2003 national survey, it was found that 40% of adults experienced difficulty in swallowing pills. Of these adults, 26% reported some form of swallowing-related medication non-compliance.1

Product
Parcopa is available in three strengths of the carbidopa-levodopa combination: 10 mg-100 mg, 25 mg-100 mg, and 25 mg-250 mg. It is not rated as a therapeutic equivalent to immediate-release Sinemet or Sinemet generic equivalents.2 It is a therapeutic alternative for patients with swallowing difficulties.

The Parcopa is mint-flavored and dissolves rapidly on the tongue. It can be swallowed with or without water.

Parcopa carries the same indications, contraindications, warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, drug interactions, and dosage recommendations as with Sinemet. Like Sinemet, it is an immediate-release formulation designed to begin release of ingredients within 30 minutes.3,4

Parcopa can be packaged in conventional prescription bottles or in blister packs without concern for durability as is the case with some rapidly dissolving tablets.

Manufacturer
Schwarz Pharma
Milwaukee, WI 53201
www.schwarzusa.com
800-558-5114

Patient Instructions
Phenylketonuric patients should be informed that Parcopa contains phenylalanine. The orally-disintegrating 10-100 mg and the 25-100 mg tablets contain 3.4 mg per tablet. The 25-250 mg tablets contain 8.4 mg of phenylalanine per tablet.

Patients should be advised to remove tablets from the bottle just prior to use. They should have dry hands and immediately place the tablet on their tongue.

Commentary
The average wholesale cost for Parcopa is approximately 40% more than for brand name Sinemet.5 This difference in cost may be offset by improved patient compliance and quality of life in Parkinson’s patients who have difficulty swallowing.

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References

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