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GEMFIBROZIL - ORAL

OTHER NAMES: Lopid

USES: This medication is used to lower high cholesterol and/or triglyceride levels in the blood. High levels of cholesterol or triglycerides may block the blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart disease. For best results, this medication must be used along with an exercise program and a low-cholesterol, low-fat diet.

HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICATION: Take this medication as prescribed. It is usually taken 30 minutes before your morning or evening meals.

It may take a few weeks to months before the full effects of this medication are noticed.

SIDE EFFECTS: Stomach upset, heartburn, gas, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, skin rash, or unusual tiredness may occur during the first few days as your body adjusts to the medication. If these effects persist or become bothersome, inform your doctor.

Notify your doctor if you experience muscle pain, weakness, fever, chills, or severe stomach pain with nausea and vomiting while taking this medication.

If this medication makes you dizzy or lightheaded, avoid driving or engaging in activities requiring alertness.

PRECAUTIONS: Tell your doctor if you have diabetes or gallbladder, kidney, or liver disease.

If you take insulin or oral diabetes medication, your dose may need to be changed because gemfibrozil may, in some instances, increase the amount of sugar in your blood. Ask your doctor if you need to change your dose.

This drug should be used only if clearly needed during pregnancy. It is not known if this medication is found in breast milk. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Before you take gemfibrozil, tell your doctor of any over-the-counter or prescription drugs you are taking, especially anticoagulants ("blood thinners") and lovastatin.

NOTES: Your doctor may periodically perform lab tests during treatment to evaluate the effectiveness of the medication. Know what your cholesterol level is and understand what it means.

Your doctor, pharmacist or nutritionist can provide you with valuable information.

This medication should not be used during pregnancy. It is not known if this medication appears in breast milk. Consult with your doctor before breast-feeding.

Do not allow anyone else to take this medication.

MISSED DOSE: If you miss a dose, take as soon as remembered; do not take if it is almost time for the next dose, instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose to catch up.

STORAGE: Store at room temperature away from sunlight and moisture.