

SFDA

Safety Communication

[05/08/2026]

Risk of Rebound Congestion, Rhinitis Medicamentosa, and Tachyphylaxis with Overuse of Nasal decongestant sprays and drops containing xylometazoline hydrochloride / oxymetazoline hydrochloride

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) would like to notify healthcare professionals about the risk of rebound congestion, rhinitis medicamentosa, and tachyphylaxis with overuse of Nasal decongestant sprays and drops containing xylometazoline hydrochloride / oxymetazoline hydrochloride.

Xylometazoline hydrochloride and oxymetazoline hydrochloride are topical nasal decongestants used for the short-term relief of nasal congestion associated with the common cold, influenza, sinusitis, and allergic rhinitis. They act as alpha-adrenergic agonists, causing vasoconstriction of the nasal blood vessels, thereby reducing swelling and improving nasal airflow.

Recent safety reviews have identified an increased risk of adverse effects associated with prolonged or excessive use of nasal decongestant sprays and drops containing xylometazoline or oxymetazoline. Reported adverse effects include:

- Rebound congestion: worsening nasal congestion when the effect of the medicine wears off.
- Rhinitis medicamentosa: chronic nasal congestion resulting from prolonged use of topical nasal decongestants.
- Tachyphylaxis: a progressive reduction in the effectiveness of the medicine with repeated use, leading patients to use the product more frequently.

These effects are more likely to occur when the products are used for longer than the recommended duration.

The SFDA provides the following recommendations for healthcare professionals:

- Advise patients that xylometazoline and/or oxymetazoline nasal decongestants should only be used for a short time and according to the instructions for use in the Patient Information Leaflet of these medications. .
- Instruct patients not to use these products for more than 5 consecutive days.
- Remind patients not to exceed the recommended dose or dosing frequency.
- Consider alternative treatment options if nasal congestion persists, worsens, or does not improve after 5 days.
- Educate patients about the risk of rebound congestion, rhinitis medicamentosa, and reduced treatment effectiveness associated with prolonged use.
- Advise patients to discontinue the product and seek medical advice if nasal congestion persists for more than 5 days or worsens during treatment, as continued use may exacerbate symptoms rather than provide relief.
- Advise patients not to use xylometazoline or oxymetazoline concomitantly with each other or with other oral or nasal decongestants used to relieve nasal congestion.

- Healthcare professionals are strongly encouraged to report any adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to the SFDA.

For a list of xylometazoline hydrochloride / oxymetazoline hydrochloride registered in Saudi Arabia, please refer to the [SFDA Drug List](#)

Call for reporting:

The SFDA urges both healthcare professionals and patients to report ADRs related to use of any medication to the SFDA using the following contact information:

The National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC):

SFDA Call Center: 19999

E-mail: npc.drug@sfda.gov.sa

Website: <https://ade.sfda.gov.sa>

aRMM:

