

# Potassium chloride for potassium depletion

This leaflet is about the use of potassium chloride for potassium depletion (low levels of potassium in the blood).



This leaflet has been written for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adult patients. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

## Name of drug

**Potassium chloride**

**Brand names:** Sando-K® (effervescent tablets), Kay-Cee-L® (liquid)

**Modified-release tablets:** Slow-K®

## Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Potassium is a mineral, which all cells in the body need to function properly. Low potassium levels can mean that important organs in the body like the heart, nerves and muscles do not function properly.

Your child may have low potassium levels because they are not taking in enough in their diet; they are losing too much because of diarrhoea, excessive sweating or dehydration; or they have a problem with their kidneys. Potassium chloride will help to increase the levels of potassium in your child's blood.

## What is potassium chloride available as?

- **Effervescent (fizzy) tablets:** Each tablet contains 470 mg of potassium (12 mmol) and 285 mg of chloride (8 mmol)
- **Modified-release (Slow-K) tablets:** 600 mg (8 mmol each of potassium and chloride)
- **Liquid medicine (syrup):** 7.5% potassium chloride (1 mmol/mL each of potassium and chloride)

If you have any concerns or questions, speak with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

## When should I give potassium chloride?

Potassium chloride is usually given **twice** each day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Ideally, these times are 10–12 hours apart, for example sometime between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8 pm. The frequency can vary depending on the dose being given and the amount of potassium required each day.

Give the medicine at about the same times each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

## How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of potassium chloride (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

 **It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

## How should I give it?



**Effervescent (Sando-K) tablets:** Dissolve the tablet in a glass of water. You can add squash or juice to hide the taste. Your child should drink it all either straight away or over 30 minutes. Your child should not chew these tablets. You can also crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of soft food, such as honey or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away, without chewing. Do not give the medicine with milk or yoghurt.



**Modified-release (Slow-K) tablets:** Should be taken with, or just after, a meal. The tablets should be swallowed whole, while standing up, with a glass of water or juice. Your child must not chew, crush or break the tablet. It is essential that it is swallowed with plenty of water or juice.



**Liquid medicine:** Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.

## When should the medicine start working?

The medicine will start working within 1–2 days, though you may not see a difference in your child. When the doctor tests their blood, they will notice a change. Continue to give the medicine to your child during this time. If you are worried about whether it is helping, contact your doctor.

## What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of potassium chloride, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of potassium chloride, you do not need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

If your child is sick again, seek advice from your GP, pharmacist or hospital. They will decide what to do, based on your child's condition and the specific medicine involved.

## What if I forget to give it?

If you remember up to 4 hours after you should have given a dose, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at about 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.

 **Never give a double dose of potassium chloride.**

## What if I give too much?

 It may be dangerous to give too much potassium chloride.

If you are concerned that you may have given too much potassium chloride, contact your doctor or local NHS services (111 in England and Scotland; 0845 4647 in Wales). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

## Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

### Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child gets bad stomach pain, brings up (vomits) blood or their stools (poo) are very dark, contact your doctor or take your child to hospital straight away, as they may have an ulcer.

### Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may have nausea (feel sick) or vomit (be sick), or have abdominal cramps, diarrhoea or flatulence (wind) when taking potassium chloride. Giving the medicine with some food may help. If the problem persists, contact your child's doctor.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at [www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk)

More information on side-effects can be found in the following leaflet [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/side-effects-childrens-medicines](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/side-effects-childrens-medicines)

## Can other medicines be given at the same time as potassium chloride?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Potassium chloride should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving them potassium chloride.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

## Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

- Your doctor will test your child's blood regularly to check that the levels of potassium in their blood are correct.

 It is important to attend any clinic appointments to ensure that your child is getting the right dose and to monitor if potassium levels are too high or too low – this is critical for the safety of your child.

## General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you feel your child is not improving, do not give extra medicine. Please continue with the regular dose and speak to your doctor.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact a doctor for advice.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

## Where I should keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- You may need to keep the liquid medicine in the fridge - check the instructions on the bottle. Make sure that the medicine doesn't freeze.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

## Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about potassium chloride and about other medicines used to treat potassium depletion.

You can also get more information from:

### England

NHS 111: 111 - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Scotland

NHS 24: 111 - [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

### Wales/Galw Lechyd Cymru

NHS Direct: 0845 4647 - [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

### Northern Ireland

NI Direct: [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)