



Sodium picosulfate for constipation

This leaflet is about the use of sodium picosulfate for constipation.

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.

This medicine can cause serious stomach cramps and diarrhoea if too much is given.

Name of drug

Sodium picosulfate (also called sodium picosulphate)

Common brands: Dulcolax Pico Perles®, Dulcolax® Pico Liquid (the brand name Dulcolax is also used for bisacodyl tablets and suppositories)

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

Your doctor will give you a medicine called an osmotic laxative (e.g. lactulose, polyethylene glycol [Laxidol, Movicol]) to give to your child first. This will soften the stool (poo). Sodium picosulfate will then help your child to pass the stool (do a poo).

What is sodium picosulfate available as?

- **Capsules:** 2.5 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 5 mg in 5 mL


When should I give sodium picosulfate?

Sodium picosulfate is usually given **once each day**. This is usually at bedtime.

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

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of sodium picosulfate (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?

This medicine works best when the stomach is empty. However, if your child has an upset stomach, you can give it with a small amount of food.



Capsules should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the capsules.



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?

Your child should do a poo 6–12 hours after taking sodium picosulfate, although it may take longer than this to work.


What if my child is sick (vomits)?

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

What if I forget to give it?

If you forget to give sodium picosulfate, do not give the missed dose.

What if I give too much?

 **It may be dangerous to give too much sodium picosulfate.**

Too much sodium picosulfate can cause stomach pain (cramps), diarrhoea (runny poo), and may lead to dehydration if too much stools (poo) are passed.

If you think you may have given your child too much sodium picosulfate, contact your doctor or local NHS services (111 in England and Scotland; 0845 4647 in Wales) or take your child to hospital.


Take the medicine container or packaging with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the doctor. 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

- Your child may get diarrhoea. If it is bad, contact your doctor for advice. You may need to give your child less sodium picosulfate.
- If your child feels weak, seems very thirsty and has a headache, they may be dehydrated. Contact your doctor for advice.

 If your child seems to have weak muscles, muscle cramps or a rapid heart rate (your child may feel that their heart is racing or fluttering), contact your doctor straight away.

Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may get stomach pain or cramps.


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 <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard>.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as sodium picosulfate?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- 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 sodium picosulfate?

- This medicine is used as part of a treatment plan for your child's constipation. It is important that your child has plenty to drink, and fibre in their diet (by eating fruit and vegetables, and wholemeal bread and pasta).

 Do not give sodium picosulfate to your child unless they have taken an osmotic laxative first.

General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same time each day, to help you remember.
- 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 your 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 should I 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.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.

Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about sodium picosulfate and the treatment of constipation.

You can also get useful information from:

England

NHS 111: 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland – NHS 24

NHS 24: 111 - www.nhs24.com

Wales/Galw Lechyd Cymru

NHS Direct: 0845 4647 - www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland

NI Direct: www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



Version 2, February 2014. © NPPG, RCPCH and WellChild 2011, all rights reserved. Reviewed by: February 2017.

The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.