



Sodium chloride for hyponatraemia

This leaflet is about the use of sodium chloride for hyponatraemia (low blood sodium).

This leaflet has been written specifically for parents and carers about the use of this medicine in children. The information may differ from that provided by the manufacturer. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Name of drug

Sodium chloride

Brand name: Slow Sodium®

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

Sodium is needed so that many parts of the body, including muscles and nerves can work properly. Hyponatraemia means that the levels of sodium in the blood are too low. Taking sodium chloride replaces the missing sodium and helps muscles and nerves to work properly.

What is sodium chloride available as?

- **Tablets:** 600 mg (10 mmol of each sodium and chloride)
- **Capsules** can be ordered specially from your pharmacist
- **Liquid medicine** can be ordered specially from your pharmacist

When should I give sodium chloride?

- Sodium 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 some time between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8 pm.
- Your doctor may want you to give sodium chloride to your child more often than this – they will explain what to do.
- For premature babies, sodium chloride may be given with every feed. Your doctor will explain what to do.

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 sodium 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?



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

You can crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, honey or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away, without chewing.



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

You can open the capsule and mix the contents with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, honey or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away, without chewing.



Liquid medicine: Shake the medicine well. Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or a medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount. For premature babies, the liquid medicine can be mixed in with formula feed or breast milk – your doctor or dietician will explain what to do.

When should the medicine start working?

The medicine should start working straight away, although you may not see any difference in your child.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of sodium chloride, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of sodium 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 usually give it twice a day

If you remember up to 6 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 1 pm. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

If you usually give it more than twice a day

Do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.

What if I give too much?

If you think you may have given your child too much sodium chloride, 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).

Sodium chloride does not usually cause any unwanted effects (side-effects).

-  If your child becomes short of breath, and their face becomes puffy, contact your doctor straight away, as the amount of sodium may be too high. Do not give your child any more sodium chloride until your doctor tells you to do so.

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 chloride?

- 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 chloride?

- Your doctor will do blood tests regularly to check the levels of sodium in your child's blood.

General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses as you may do harm.
- 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 straight away.
- 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.
- 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 or pharmacist will be able to give you more information about sodium chloride and other medicines used to treat hyponatraemia.

You can also get useful information from:

England

NHS 111: 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland

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



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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.