



Lactulose for constipation

This leaflet is about the use of lactulose 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.

Name of drug

Lactulose

Brand names: Duphalac[®], Lactugal[®], Laevolac[®]

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

Constipation (difficulty doing a poo) can make your child feel poorly. Lactulose is a type of laxative that works by softening the stool (poo). It should help your child to produce a comfortable soft stool that is easy to pass.

What is lactulose available as?

- **Liquid medicine:** 3.1–3.7 g in 5 mL

When should I give lactulose?

Lactulose 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.

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.

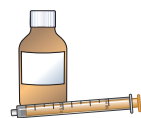
How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of lactulose (the dose) that is right for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label. It may need to be increased until your child passes a soft stool every day. Your doctor will advise you.



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

How should I give it?



Liquid medicine: Measure out the right amount using a medicine spoon or oral syringe. 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?

It may take a day or two before lactulose softens the stool enough for your child to pass it more comfortably. Continue to give lactulose to your child during this time. If there is no change after 2–3 days, contact your doctor for advice as you may need to try a different medicine or a higher dose of lactulose.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of lactulose, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of lactulose, 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.

What if I give too much?

It is unlikely that you will cause any harm if you give your child too much lactulose by mistake. If you are concerned, contact your doctor or local NHS services (111 in England and Scotland; 0845 4647 in Wales).

Have the medicine bottle 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).

- When your child first starts taking lactulose they may have flatulence (passing wind), stomach pain and may feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit). These effects usually wear off. If they are a problem after one week, contact your 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 <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard>.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as lactulose?

- 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 this medicine?

- Long-term use of lactulose is very safe. It does not mean your child will always need to take it to open their bowels (do a poo).

- You can help your child's constipation by giving them high-fibre foods such as fruit, vegetables, bran and high-fibre cereals to eat. Also encourage them to drink plenty of water, which will help to soften the stools. Encouraging them to be active will also help their constipation. Your pharmacist, doctor or health visitor will be able to give you advice and support.

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 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.
- 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 doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about lactulose and about other medicines and treatments for constipation.

You can also get useful information from:

England

NHS 111: 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland

NHS 24: 111 - www.nhs24.com

Wales/Galw Iechyd Cymru

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

Northern Ireland

NI Direct: www.nidirect.gov.uk

ERIC, The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity

www.eric.org.uk - 0845 370 8008

Childhood Constipation

www.childhoodconstipation.com

Core – Information About Constipation

www.corecharity.org.uk/images/constipation.pdf

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.