



Amiodarone for abnormal heart rhythm

This leaflet is 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 adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Name of medicine

Amiodarone

Brand name: Cordarone X

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

In some children, the heart does not beat with a regular rhythm or pattern. This is called arrhythmia. Amiodarone will help your child's heart to beat with a proper rhythm and rate (speed) so that it pumps blood around the body more efficiently.

What is amiodarone available as?

- **Tablets:** 100 mg, 200 mg
- **Liquid medicine** can be ordered specially from your pharmacy

When should I give amiodarone?

Amiodarone may be given **once, twice or three times** each day. Your doctor will tell you how often to give it. They may change how often your child should have the medicine after a few weeks of treatment.

- **Once a day:** this can be in the morning OR the evening.
- **Twice a day:** this should be 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.
- **Three times each day:** this should be once in the morning, once in the early afternoon and once in the evening. Ideally, these times are at least 6 hours apart, for example 8 am, 2 pm and 8 pm.

Give the medicine at about the same time(s) each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine.

How much should I give?

Your health professional will work out the amount of medicine (the dose) that is right for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

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

How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water or juice/squash. Your child should not chew the tablet. You can crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, jam or mashed potato. Make sure your child swallows it all straight away, without chewing.

Sometimes, to provide the correct dose of amiodarone, you may need to give your child part of a tablet or to disperse a tablet in a small amount of water and give part of the mixture using a medicine syringe. Your health professional will explain what to do. This method should only be used if you have been told to do it. Any unused mixture should be poured into a paper towel and put in the bin. Do not pour it down the sink.



Liquid medicine: Shake the medicine well. Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount. Make sure your child takes it all straight away.

When should the medicine start to work?

It usually takes a couple of weeks for amiodarone to work, so you will not see much difference in your child's symptoms to start with. Continue to give the medicine during this time. If you are worried about whether it is helping, contact your child's healthcare team but do not stop giving amiodarone.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

If your child is sick, you do not need to give them another dose of amiodarone. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If you usually give it once a day in the morning: Give the missed dose when you remember during the day, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the next dose is due.

If you usually give it once a day in the evening: If you remember before bedtime, give the missed dose. You do not need to wake up a sleeping child to give a missed dose. You can give the missed dose in the morning, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the evening dose is due.

If you usually give it twice a day: 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.

If you usually give it three times a day: Do not give the missed dose.

 Never give a double dose of amiodarone.

What if I think I have given too much?

 It may be dangerous to give too much amiodarone.

If your child has any, or all, of the following symptoms they may have had too much amiodarone:

- feeling dizzy, faint, tired or confused
- being sick or having stomach pain
- slow heart rate.

If you think you may have given too much amiodarone, contact your healthcare team or take your child to hospital.

Are there any possible side-effects?

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

Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to amiodarone. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.

 If your child's heartbeat becomes more uneven or becomes very slow (signs to look out for: feeling faint, dizzy, unusually tired and short of breath), take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.

 If your child starts being sick every few hours, has stomach pains or a fever (temperature above 38°C), is very sleepy or gets a yellowish tinge to the skin or whites of the eyes, stop giving amiodarone. Contact your healthcare team or take your child to hospital, as there may be a problem with your child's liver.

 If your child loses sight in one eye, their eye balls become dim and colourless, or their eyes are sore and painful to move, stop giving amiodarone. Contact your healthcare team or take your child to hospital.

Other side-effects you need to know about

 Your child's skin may become more sensitive to sunlight. When outdoors, they should wear a long-sleeved top, trousers and a hat and should use a high-factor sunscreen on exposed skin (at least SPF 30). Keep them out of strong sunlight.

Contact your healthcare team if your child:

- develops blurred eyesight or complains of seeing a coloured 'halo' or dazzling lights
- Starts to feel restless or agitated, loses weight and sweats more than normal (these could be signs of too much thyroid hormone)
- starts to feel very tired, weak or generally 'run down', gains weight, becomes constipated and complains of aching muscles (these could be signs of too little thyroid hormone).
- Your child's skin may turn a slate-grey colour. This is nothing to worry about but if you are concerned contact your child's health professional.

There may sometimes be other side-effects. If you are concerned, contact your child's health professional.

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

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your health professional has told you not to.

- Amiodarone should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your child's healthcare team about any other medicines your child is taking before giving amiodarone. This includes herbal and complementary medicines.

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

- Your child will need a blood test every few months, to check that the medicine is not affecting their liver or thyroid gland. It is important that you attend these appointments.
- If your child needs any other treatment, including dental treatment, you must tell the healthcare team that your child is taking amiodarone. It is also important to tell them for several months after your child has stopped taking amiodarone, as the medicine stays in the body for a long time.

General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your health professional 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 a health professional straight away.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the '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 healthcare team will be able to give you more information about amiodarone and about other medicines used to treat abnormal heart rhythm.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111

Tel 111 [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

[nidirect.gov.uk](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111 [nhs24.scot](https://www.nhs24.scot)

Children's Heart Federation

0808 808 5000 [chfed.org.uk](https://www.chfed.org.uk)

Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111 [111.wales.nhs.uk](https://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)

Arrhythmia Alliance (UK)

[hearhythmalliance.org/aa/uk](https://www.hearhythmalliance.org/aa/uk)

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk