



Atorvastatin for high cholesterol

This leaflet is about the use of atorvastatin for high cholesterol (which can run in families).



This leaflet has been written specifically 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

Atorvastatin

Brand name: Lipitor®

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

Taking atorvastatin reduces the amount of cholesterol your child's liver makes. This lowers the risk of your child getting heart disease in later life.

What is atorvastatin available as?

- **Tablets:** 10 mg, 20 mg, 40 mg, 80 mg

When should I give atorvastatin?

- Atorvastatin is usually given **once** each day. This is usually in the morning or the evening.

Give the medicine at about the same time(s) 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 atorvastatin (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

Your doctor may suggest that your child has a low dose of atorvastatin to start with. They may then increase the dose as your child gets used to the medicine and depending on how your child responds to it. The dose may be increased after 4 weeks.

 **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 (*not* grapefruit juice). 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, honey or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away, without chewing.

 Your child should not have grapefruit or grapefruit juice while they are taking atorvastatin, as they can make the concentration of atorvastatin in the blood too high and cause side-effects.

When should the medicine start working?

Atorvastatin starts working straight away but you may not see much 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 atorvastatin, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of atorvastatin, you **do not** need to give them another dose. 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.

What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give an extra dose of atorvastatin by mistake. If you are concerned that you may have given too much, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647 in England and Wales; 08454 24 24 24 in Scotland). 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

 Rarely, atorvastatin can cause inflamed (swollen) muscles. If your child develops pains or weakness in their muscles (arms or legs), or their muscles are tender to touch, contact your doctor straight away.

 Very rarely, atorvastatin can cause breathing problems. If your child develops a cough that doesn't go away or becomes short of breath, please seek advice from your doctor.

 If your child gets a yellowish tinge to the skin or whites of the eyes, contact your doctor straight away, as there may be a problem with your child's liver, but this is very rare.

Other side-effects you need to know about

- If your child develops a rash within the first 2 weeks after starting atorvastatin, please contact your child's doctor as they may be more sensitive than usual to atorvastatin.

- Your child may get stomach ache or feel sick (nausea) and they may get constipated (have difficulty doing a poo) or have diarrhoea. They may also have a headache or feel dizzy. If you are worried, or these side-effects are still a problem after 2 weeks contact your doctor.
- Atorvastatin can cause changes in appetite, so your child may be more hungry or less hungry than usual. Encourage them to eat regular meals and a healthy diet. If your child loses a lot of weight, contact your doctor for advice.
- Atorvastatin can cause itching all over the body. Try applying a moisturising cream or anti-itch cream. If this does not help within a few days, contact your doctor.
- If your child complains of an aching chest or pain in their back, contact your doctor as there may be a problem with their pancreas, but this is very rare.
- Your child may be more tired than usual or have sleep disturbances such as difficulty getting to sleep. You may also notice changes in their mood (more sad than normal) or memory (they become forgetful). If this is a problem contact your doctor.
- Your child's hair may become thinner and some may fall out. If this happens, discuss it with your doctor at your next visit.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor.

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

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Atorvastatin should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. This includes some types of antibiotics. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving atorvastatin.
- 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 child should not have grapefruit or grapefruit juice while they are taking atorvastatin, as they can make the concentration of atorvastatin in the blood too high and cause side-effects.

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 doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about atorvastatin and about other medicines used to treat atorvastatin.

You can also get useful information from:

NHS Direct (England)

0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS 24 (Scotland)

08454 24 24 24

www.nhs24.com

NHS Direct (Wales/Galw Iechyd Cymru)

0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

NI Direct (Northern Ireland)

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.