

# Oseltamivir for influenza (flu)

This leaflet is about the use of oseltamivir for the prevention or treatment of influenza (usually called flu).



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 drug

**Oseltamivir**

**Brand name:** Tamiflu

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

Oseltamivir may be prescribed to help protect your child from becoming unwell if someone they have close contact with has flu, particularly if your child already has a long-term illness. It may also be prescribed to help your child recover from the flu. Your doctor will tell you how long you need to give oseltamivir for.

## What is oseltamivir available as?

- **Capsules:** 30 mg, 45 mg, 75 mg
- **Liquid medicine (suspension):** 30 mg in 5 mL

## When should I give oseltamivir?

### For the prevention of flu

- Oseltamivir is usually given once each day. This can be in the morning or evening.


### For the treatment of flu

- Oseltamivir 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 can be given some time between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 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, which will help you to remember.

## How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of oseltamivir (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, and how long to give it for.**

## How should I give it?



**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, chocolate syrup, honey or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away, without chewing.



**Liquid suspension:** Shake the medicine well. 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.

If your child does not like the taste you can measure out the medicine as above and mix it with a small amount of chocolate syrup, apple sauce or strong squash. Your child should swallow it all straight away.

## When should the medicine start working?

**If you are giving oseltamivir to your child to prevent flu,** you may not notice any difference in your child, although the medicine will still be working. Continue to give the medicine to your child so that they do not become unwell.

**If you are giving oseltamivir to your child to treat flu,** they should begin to feel better after 2–3 days. You should continue to give the medicine for as long as your doctor has told you to, even when your child starts to feel better. Your doctor will tell you how long to give oseltamivir for.

## What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of oseltamivir, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of oseltamivir, 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 normally give it once a day in the morning


- Give the missed dose when you remember during the day.

### If you normally give it once a day in the evening

- If you remember before bedtime, give the missed dose. If you remember after this, you do not need to wake your child up to give them the missed dose. You can give the missed dose in the morning, as long as this is at least 8 hours before the evening dose is due.

### If you normally 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. Wait until the next normal dose.

 **Never give a double dose of oseltamivir.**


## What if I give too much?

If you think you may have given your child too much oseltamivir, contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet). Have the medicine packet 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

 If your child has any of the following, contact your doctor straight away or take your child to hospital:

- irregular heart beat or fast heart beats (your child may say that their heart is racing or feels fluttery)
- yellowing of the skin or whites of eyes (jaundice)
- problems with vision, or painful red eyes
- fever (temperature above 38°C) and rash or mouth ulcers
- becoming muddled or disorientated (confusion).

## Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may feel sick or be sick (vomit) and they may have stomach pains. It may help to give each dose of oseltamivir with some food or milk.
- Your child may get headaches.

These side effects should get better after a few days. If they are still a problem after a week, contact your doctor for advice.

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 oseltamivir?

- 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 oseltamivir?

- Capsules can be stored at room temperature.
- Keep the liquid suspension medicine at room temperature (not over 25°C) or in the fridge (2–8°C). It should not be kept for longer than 17 days after the bottle has been opened.

## General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times 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 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?

- Storage of this medicine is described above.
- 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 oseltamivir and about other medicines used to prevent or treat flu.

You can also get useful information from:

### England: NHS 111

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

### Scotland: NHS 24

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

### Wales: NHS 111 Wales

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

### Northern Ireland: NI Direct

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

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://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](http://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.