

Medicines for Children information for parents and carers

Rifampicin for the treatment of tuberculosis

This leaflet is about the use of rifampicin for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB for short). Your child will have to take up to four medicines for at least 3-6 months to cure their TB.



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.

It is essential that your child takes all their medicines daily, as explained by the doctor, and continues until the doctor tells you to stop.

Name of drug

Rifampicin (rif-AMP-i-cin)


Brand names: Rifadin, Rimactane

Rifampicin also comes in tablets mixed with other drugs used to treat TB, such as Rifater and Rifinah

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

The bacteria that cause TB are hard to kill. Your child will have to take up to four medicines for **at least** 3-6 months. Rifampicin is one of these key medicines.

Your child may not necessarily have symptoms from the TB infection. Any symptoms should start to improve soon after starting treatment.

 You **must** continue to give the medicines until your doctor tells you to stop. If you stop too soon, or your child does not take the medicines as your doctor has told you to, the bacteria may not be killed and the TB may come back. It is also possible that the bacteria will become resistant to the first drugs, which means that they will no longer work and other stronger drugs will have to be used, or the TB will no longer be treatable.


What is rifampicin available as?

- **Capsules:** 150 mg, 300 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 100 mg per 5 mL; this syrup contains sucrose

When should I give rifampicin?

Rifampicin (along with other TB drugs) is usually given **once** each day. This can be in the morning or the evening.


Give the medicine at about the same time each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

 You need to give rifampicin to your child when their stomach is empty. Give it 30 minutes before a meal or 2 hours after a meal.

How much should I give?

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

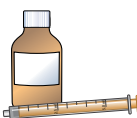
The dose of rifampicin your child needs depends on their weight. This may need to be adjusted from time to time, especially in babies and young children. Your doctor will tell you if this is necessary.

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

How should I give it?



Capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of water or juice (but not milk). Your child should not chew the capsule.



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?

Your child will start to feel better after taking the TB medicines for about 2 weeks and should have fewer symptoms. They **must** continue to take the drugs every day until the doctor says to stop treatment. This will be for at least 3-6 months.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of rifampicin, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of rifampicin, 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, TB nurse, 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 forget to give your child a dose, give it as soon as you remember, as long as this is no more than 12 hours after the missed dose.
- Tell your nurse/doctor if you miss a dose.

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

What if I give too much?

 It may be dangerous to give too much rifampicin.

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



If your child has swelling of the face, lips or tongue, difficulty breathing or gets a rash or itching, **take them to your doctor or hospital straight away**, as they may be allergic to rifampicin.


 If your child develops any of the following, take them to your doctor, TB nurse or hospital straight away:

- severe dizziness or faints
- swollen face, stomach, arms or legs, which may mean they have water build up (fluid retention)
- yellowing of skin and/or whites of the eyes
- sores or blisters on the skin or in the mouth
- passing only small amounts of urine (wee) or none at all
- bleeding from the nose, gums or throat, or blood in the urine.


Other side-effects you need to know about

Your child may get the following symptoms when they first start taking rifampicin. They should wear off as your child's body gets used to the medicine. If they are still a problem after a week or so, contact your doctor or TB nurse for advice.

- They may get stomach cramps, feel sick or be sick (vomit) or get diarrhoea.
- They may get headaches, feel drowsy (sleepy) or seem confused.
- They may get pains in the bones or muscles.
- They may sweat more than normal or flush (where the skin goes red).
- Their heart beat may feel stronger and less regular than normal (they may say it feels fluttery) and they may feel dizzy, light-headed or may even faint.
- Your child may get watery eyes and the edges of the eye lids may get red and sore. This should wear off. If your child has any pain in their eyes, or cannot see properly, contact your doctor straight away.
- Some girls have problems with their periods when they start taking rifampicin. The periods may become irregular, and they may get some light bleeding (spotting) between periods. Their cycle should return to normal after 2-4 months. If it doesn't, contact your doctor or TB nurse.
- Rifampicin may make your child's urine (wee), faeces (poo), saliva (spit), mucus (phlegm), sweat and tears turn an orange-red colour. This is not harmful. The red colour in tears may last for some time after your child has stopped taking rifampicin and may stain clothes.

 Your child should not wear soft contact lenses whilst taking rifampicin, as they are likely to become stained.

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

 The oral contraceptive pill does not work properly during treatment with rifampicin so your daughter should use other forms of contraception if she is sexually active.

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or Ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Rifampicin should not be taken with many common medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor about all medicines your child is taking before starting rifampicin.


- 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?

- It is important that your child takes their TB medicines every day. You may find a calendar useful, so that you can cross off the days when you give the medicines.
- You should also keep all your clinic appointments as your doctor or TB nurse needs to check how your child is doing.

General advice about medicines

- Give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- Only give the medicines 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 doctor straight away.

- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you 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 is important to keep rifampicin somewhere where it cannot get damp.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.

Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or TB nurse will be able to give you more information about rifampicin and about other medicines used to treat TB.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111 - Tel 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24 - Tel 111 - www.nhs24.scot

Wales: NHS 111 Wales - Tel 111 - www.111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct - www.nidirect.gov.uk

British Lung Foundation: 0845 850 5020 - www.lunguk.org

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk