

Nifedipine for high blood pressure

This leaflet is about the use of nifedipine for high blood pressure (which is also called hypertension).



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

Nifedipine

Brand names: Adalat, Adipine, Coarcten, Fortipine, Hypolar Retard, Nifedipress, Tensipine, Valni XL

Why is it important to take this medicine?

High blood pressure can cause damage to internal organs. Nifedipine is one of a group of medicines called calcium-channel blockers that help to lower blood pressure.

What is nifedipine available as?

- **Tablets:** 10 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg, 40 mg, 60 mg
- **Capsules:** 5 mg, 10 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg, 60 mg
- **Liquid medicine** can be ordered specially from your pharmacist

When should I give nifedipine?


Nifedipine may be given **once, twice or three times** each day. Your doctor will tell you how often to give it.

- **Once a day:** this is usually in the morning.
- **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, which will help you to remember.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of nifedipine (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.**

How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablet.

If your child is unable to swallow a tablet whole, **it is important that you speak with your pharmacist or doctor before you consider crushing the tablet, as not all brands can be crushed.**

If you do crush the tablet, 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.



Capsules should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the capsule.



Liquid medicine: Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or medicine spoon. 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's blood pressure will start to come down after a few days, although you will not see any 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 nifedipine, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of nifedipine 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

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. You do not need to wake a sleeping child to give a missed dose.

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. Wait until the next normal dose.

If you usually give it three times a day

If you miss a dose, wait until the next normal dose. Do not give the missed dose.



Never give a double dose of nifedipine.

What if I give too much?



It may be dangerous to give too much nifedipine because it may make your child's blood pressure too low.

If you think you may have given your child too much nifedipine, contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet) or take your child to hospital. Take the medicine container or packet with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the doctor. 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 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 nifedipine. **Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.**



If your child has an irregular or fast heart beat (they may say that their heart feels fluttery or is racing), contact your doctor straight away.

Other side-effects you need to know about:



If your child develops an itchy rash or swelling of the hands and feet, becomes sweaty, or gets a yellowish tinge to the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice), contact your doctor straight away, as they may be unusually sensitive to nifedipine.

- Your child may feel dizzy or light-headed when they stand up, or may faint. Encourage them to stand up slowly, and to sit or lie down if they feel dizzy or light-headed. If this happens too often, contact your doctor to check your child's blood pressure, as it may be too low.

Your child may get some of the following side-effects when they first start taking nifedipine. They are usually mild and should wear off after a few days as your child gets used to the medicine. If they are still a problem after 2 weeks, or you are worried, contact your doctor, but continue to give nifedipine.

- Your child may get a headache.
- Your child may feel sick (nausea), be sick (vomit), have stomach pains, diarrhoea (runny poo) or constipation (difficulty doing a poo). Giving the medicine with food may help.
- Your child may also need to pass urine (wee) more often than usual.
- Some children find that their eyesight is blurry or double.
- Your child may have nose bleeds, or some swelling of their legs or joints, or may have muscle pain or pins and needles.
- If your child takes nifedipine for a long time (several months), their gums may become swollen. They will return to normal when the treatment is stopped. Brushing their teeth with a soft toothbrush and regular flossing will help. If you are concerned contact your doctor or dentist.

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

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

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told

you not to.

- Nifedipine should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving nifedipine.
- 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?



Do not give your child grapefruit or grapefruit juice, as it can change the amount of nifedipine in your child's body.

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 I should 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 nifedipine and about other medicines used to treat increased blood pressure.

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 Direct - Tel 111 - www.111.wales.nhs.uk

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