



# Carvedilol to improve heart function

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

### Carvedilol

**Brand name:** Eucardic

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

In heart failure, the heart does not pump as well as it might. Carvedilol relaxes the blood vessels, which makes it easier for the heart to pump blood around the body.

## What is carvedilol available as?

**Tablets:** 3.125 mg, 6.25 mg, 12.5 mg, 25 mg; these contain a small amount of lactose

## When should I give carvedilol?


Carvedilol 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 sometime between 7 am and 8 am, and between 7 am and 8 pm.

Give the medicine at about the same times 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 carvedilol (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 to start with. They may then increase the dose as your child gets used to the medicine and depending on how they respond to it.

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

## How should I give it?

Carvedilol should be taken with some food.



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

- You can crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of cold or room temperature soft food such as yogurt, mashed potato or jam. Make sure your child swallows it straight away without chewing.
- Occasionally, the only way to provide the correct dose of carvedilol is to give part of a tablet or to disperse a tablet in a small amount of water and give some of the mixture.

- Your doctor or pharmacist will let you know if this is necessary and explain what to do. This method should only be used when 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.

## When should the medicine start working?

Your child's symptoms of heart failure should start to get better once your doctor has worked out the best dose. You may notice that your child is less short of breath, has a better appetite and their skin is less puffy.


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

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of carvedilol, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of carvedilol, 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 family doctor, pharmacist or hospital.

## What if I forget to give it?

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. Give the next dose as usual.


 Never give a double dose of carvedilol.

## What if I give too much?

 It can be dangerous to give too much carvedilol because it may make your child's blood pressure fall.

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


Take the medicine or packaging with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the doctor. Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

 If your child feels very faint or dizzy, cold and sweaty, or has a weak or rapid heart rate (they may feel as though their heart is racing or fluttering), or they begin to breathe quickly, contact your doctor or take your child to hospital straight away.

## 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 gets a rash in the first 2 weeks of taking carvedilol, contact your doctor straight away, as they may be allergic to carvedilol. Do not give any more medicine until you have spoken to your doctor.

### Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may feel dizzy or light-headed when they stand up, or they may faint. Encourage them to stand up slowly, and to sit or lie down if they feel dizzy. This occurs most often after starting treatment or increasing the dose and should get better after a little time. If it happens often, contact your doctor, as your child's blood pressure may be too low.
- Your child may get flu-like symptoms (high temperature, aches and pains, headache), blocked nose, headache or wheeziness.
- They may get nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea.
- They may get a dry mouth. Eating citrus fruits (e.g. oranges) and taking sips of water may help.
- Your child's eyes may feel dry or irritated (red and itchy) and their eyesight may become blurred.
- Children sometimes feel depressed when taking this medicine, and may have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares.

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 suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)

### Can other medicines be given at the same time as carvedilol?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Carvedilol should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. It is important to tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking **before** giving your child carvedilol.
- You must also tell your doctor and pharmacist that your child is taking carvedilol **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal and complementary medicines.

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

- Treatment with carvedilol is usually started in hospital, so that the effect on your child can be monitored carefully and the right dose can be worked out.
- Your doctor will do blood tests to make sure that your child's kidneys are working well. They will also check your child's blood pressure regularly.

### 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 '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 or pharmacist will be able to give you more information about carvedilol and about other medicines used to treat heart failure.

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.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

#### Northern Ireland: NI Direct

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

#### British Heart Foundation

Helpline: 0300 330 3311

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

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



Version 2, June 2019. © NPPG, RCPCH and WellChild 2011, all rights reserved. Review by June 2022.

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.