

Choral hydrate to help sleep



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.

- Chloral hydrate should only be used to help your child get to sleep if your specialist has prescribed it for this use.
- Always follow your specialist's instructions about how to use chloral hydrate.

Name of medicine

Chloral hydrate

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

Chloral hydrate is only suitable for children with neurodevelopmental disorders. It is a sedative and will calm your child and help them get to sleep.

It may be prescribed if your child has been having difficulty sleeping and this is affecting their daily life. It can only be prescribed by a specialist.

What is chloral hydrate available as?

Liquid medicine: 143 mg, 200 mg or 500 mg per 5 mL

- ⚠ Check that you are always given the same strength of medicine.

Also check how long the medicine can be used for once it has been opened, as the expiry date may not always be the same.

When should I give chloral hydrate?

Give the medicine about 30 minutes before your child goes to bed.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of medicine (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.
- ⚠ Chloral hydrate is a sedative and can be dangerous if too much is given.

How should I give it?



Measure out the right amount of medicine 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.

You can mix the medicine in a glass of milk or fruit squash to hide the taste. Your child should drink it all, straight away.

When should the medicine start to work?

Your child should feel sleepy within 15–30 minutes and should fall asleep within an hour.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- ⚠ Do not give a second dose of chloral hydrate. Contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

What if I think I have given too much?

If your child has any, or all, of the following symptoms they may have had too much chloral hydrate:

- Difficulty breathing
- You are unable to wake your child
- They seem particularly weak
- Their pupils (the black circles in the eyes) are tiny
- Your child feels that their heart is racing.

- ⚠ It can be dangerous to give too much chloral hydrate because it is a sedative. If you think you may have given too much, contact your doctor or nurse immediately for advice or take your child to hospital.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they cause effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about

- ☎ If your child has difficulty breathing, or develops a rash, or seems particularly weak, take them to hospital or call for an ambulance.


Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may feel dizzy and confused or may be less alert than usual.
- They may have nausea (feel sick), vomit (be sick) or diarrhoea. Contact your doctor if these become a problem.
- Your child may have wind and bloating (swollen belly),
- They may seem excitable.
- They may have a headache.
- They may lose coordination.



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 mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard.

More information on side-effects can be found in a [leaflet](#) on our website.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as chloral hydrate?

-  Your child should not have any other medicine that makes them drowsy as chloral hydrate also has this effect. This includes medicines that are bought over the counter from a pharmacy or a shop and herbal and complementary medicines.
- Chloral hydrate should not be taken with some other medicines. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving chloral hydrate.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist 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?

-  If your child has been taking chloral hydrate for some time, do not stop using it suddenly as your child may experience unpleasant withdrawal effects. If you or your child wants to stop using chloral hydrate, your doctor will explain how to gradually reduce the dose.
- The medicine may make your child feel dizzy or drowsy, and they may have difficulty concentrating. Tell your child's teacher that they are taking this medicine. Your child may need to avoid activities for which they need to be alert, such as cycling and sport.
-  Each time you open a new bottle of liquid medicine, check how long you can use it for, as the expiry dates may differ with different liquid medicines.

General advice about medicines

- 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 a 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 chloral hydrate and about other medicines used to help sleep.

You can also get information from:

England: NHS 111

Tel 111 nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111 nhs24.scot

Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111 111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

nidirect.gov.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk