



Digoxin 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.

- Digoxin can be dangerous if you give too much. Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine as it can be harmful.
- Do not stop giving digoxin without talking to your health professional, as it could cause harm.

Name of medicine

Digoxin

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

Digoxin helps the heart to beat more strongly.

What is digoxin available as?

Liquid medicine: 50 micrograms per mL (may contain ethanol and sucrose)

Tablets: 62.5, 125 and 250 micrograms

When should I give digoxin?

Digoxin may be given **once or twice a day**. Your health professional will tell you how often to give it.

- **Once a day:** This can be in the morning OR the evening.
- **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 between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8pm.

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 child will start taking digoxin while in hospital, to check how it is working and to work out the right dose for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

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

How should I give it?



Liquid medicine: Shake the medicine well. Measure out the right amount using the pipette provided with the medicine. If you are not sure how to measure the right amount, ask your pharmacist to show you. Make sure your child takes all the medicine straight away. You should not dilute the liquid medicine or add it to your child's drink.



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

You can dissolve the tablet in a small glass of water and add some fruit juice/squash to hide the taste. Your child should drink it all straight away. Then add some more water to the glass, swirl it round and ask your child to drink it. This makes sure they get all the medicine.

- Avoid giving digoxin with foods that are high in fibre (such as wholemeal bread) because the amount of digoxin absorbed into the body may be reduced.

When should the medicine start to work?

It usually takes 2–3 weeks for digoxin to work, and you will not see much difference in your child. Continue to give the medicine to your child during this time. If you are worried about whether it is helping, contact your health professional but do not stop giving digoxin.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

If your child is sick, do not give another dose of digoxin.

What if I forget to give it?

If you usually give it once a day in the morning: 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.

If you usually give it once a day in the evening: If you remember before bedtime, give the missed dose. You do not need to wake up a sleeping child to give a missed dose. You can give the missed dose in the morning, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the evening dose is due.

If you usually give it twice a day: If you remember within 4 hours, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after this time, do not give the missed dose. Wait until it is the time to give the next normal dose.

What if I think I have given too much?

 It can be dangerous to give too much digoxin.

- If your child has any of the following symptoms they may have had too much digoxin: nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, dizziness, fatigue, confusion, generally feeling unwell, problems with their eye sight or irregular or racing heart rate.
- If you think your child may have had too much digoxin, contact your child's healthcare team for advice or take your child to hospital. Take the medicine container or packaging with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to child's healthcare team. Have the medicine or 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 cause 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 digoxin. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.



If your child's heart beat becomes more uneven or slow (your child may feel faint, dizzy, or unusually tired and short of breath), take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.



Contact your child's healthcare team as soon as possible if your child has any of the following:

- diarrhoea or vomiting
- dizziness or confusion
- skin rash or itch
- blurred (fuzzy) or double vision, they can see halos (light circles) or they say their vision is tinted green or yellow.

Other side-effects you need to know about

Your child may sometimes get side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your child's healthcare team. You can report any suspected side-effects to the UK safety scheme: [MHRA Yellow Card](#). More information on side-effects can be found in the [Medicines for Children leaflet](#).

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

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your child's healthcare team has told you not to.
- Digoxin should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your child's healthcare team about any other medicines your child is taking before giving digoxin.
- Check with your child's healthcare team 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 is unwell or eats or drink less than normal for a few days, contact your child's healthcare team as

Digoxin to improve heart function

they may need to change how much digoxin your child has.



Do not stop giving digoxin without talking to your child's healthcare team.

- Your child will need regular blood tests to measure how much digoxin is in the blood and that their kidneys are working properly.
- Tell any health professional who treats your child (including dentists) that your child is taking digoxin.

General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your health professional 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 a health professional 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 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where should I keep this medicine?



Make sure children cannot see or reach the medicine as it can be harmful.

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your child's healthcare team will be able to give you more information about digoxin and other medicines used to improve heart function.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111 Tel 111 [nhs.uk](#)

Scotland: NHS 24 Tel 111 [nhs24.scot](#)

NHS 111 Wales Tel 111 [111.wales.nhs.uk](#)

Northern Ireland: NI Direct [nidirect.gov.uk](#)

Children's Heart Federation:

0300 561 0065 [www.chfed.org.uk](#)

Tiny Tickers:

0300 102 1508 [tinytickers.org](#)

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk