



Propranolol for high blood pressure

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.



Do not stop giving propranolol suddenly, as your child may have a harmful increase in blood pressure or heart rate.

Name of medicine

Propranolol

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

High blood pressure (hypertension) can damage the body's organs if it goes on for a long time. Propranolol is a medicine called a beta blocker. It helps to relax the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure, which makes it easier for the heart to pump blood around the body.

What is propranolol available as?

- **Tablets:** 10 mg, 40 mg, 80 mg, 160 mg
- **Modified-release capsules:** 80 mg, 160 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 5 mg in 5 mL, 10 mg in 5 mL, 40 mg in 5 mL, 50 mg in 5 mL

When should I give propranolol?

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.

Liquid medicine and tablets

Propranolol liquid medicines and tablets are given **two or three** times a day for high blood pressure. Your health professional will tell you how often to give it.

Twice each day: Give one dose in the morning and one in the evening. Ideally these times are 10–12 hours apart. For example, this could be between 7 and 8 am and between 7 and 8 pm.

Three times each day: These should be 6–7 hours apart, depending on what time your child wakes up and goes to bed. For example, this could be between 7 and 8 am, between 1 and 2 pm, and between 7 and 8 pm.

Modified-release capsules

These are usually given **once each day**. This can be in the morning or the evening.

How much should I give?

- Your health professional may suggest that your child has a low dose of propranolol to start with. They may then increase the dose as your child gets used to the medicine and depending on how your child responds to it.

Your health professional 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 health professional's instructions about how much to give.

How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, juice or squash. Your child should not chew the tablet. You can crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, jam or mashed potato. Make sure your child swallows it all straight away, without chewing.



Modified-release capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the capsule. Do not crush or break the capsule, because it will not work properly.



Liquid medicine: Shake the medicine well. Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe. You can get these from your pharmacist.

Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount. Make sure your child takes it all straight away.



Liquid medicine comes in several different strengths. Make a note of which one you usually have, and check that you have been given the right one each time.

When should the medicine start to work?

The medicine starts working straight away.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of propranolol, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of propranolol, 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 health professional, pharmacist or hospital. They will decide what to do based on your child's condition.

What if I forget to give it?

If you usually give it once a day

- If you remember up to 12 hours after you should have given the dose, give the missed dose.
- If you remember after this time, do not give the missed dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

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 time to give the next normal dose.

If you usually give it three times a day: You do not need to give the missed dose. Give the next dose as normal.

What if I think I have given too much?

 It may be harmful to give too much propranolol.

If your child has any of the following symptoms, they may have had too much propranolol:

- they feel faint, dizzy, or cold and sweaty
- they have a seizure or fit
- slow or rapid heart rate (they may feel as though their heart is racing or fluttering)
- they begin to breathe quickly or have trouble breathing.

Contact your health professional or take your child to hospital. Take the medicine packaging with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the health professional.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they cause unwanted effects (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child is short of breath or wheezy after having propranolol, take them to hospital or call an ambulance, as the medicine may have triggered an asthma attack.

 If your child's face, lips or tongue start to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to propranolol. Take them to hospital or call an ambulance.

 If your child has an irregular or fast heart beat (their heart feels fluttery or is racing), contact your health professional **straight away**.

 If your child gets a yellowish tinge to the skin or whites of the eyes, or they have severe stomach pain, pale poo or dark wee or a high temperature (above 38°C), contact your health professional, as there may be a problem with their liver.

 If your child gets nosebleeds that last over 10 mins, unexplained bruising, or they bruise more easily than usual, contact your health professional, as there may be a problem with your child's blood.

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 or light-headed. If this happens frequently, ask for your child's blood pressure to be checked, as it may be too low.
- Your child may say that their heart is beating slowly.
- Your child may get headaches.
- Your child's hands and feet may feel cold. This is nothing to worry about but if their hands or feet hurt, contact your health professional for advice.
- Your child may feel sick or be sick (vomit) when they first start taking propranolol. Giving the medicine with some food may help. If this is still a problem after a week, contact your health professional for advice.

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Your child may feel physically tired (lethargic) and they may have difficulty getting to sleep.

Your child may sometimes get side-effects that are not listed here. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your health professional.

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

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless you have been told you not to.
- Propranolol should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your health professional about any other medicines your child is taking before giving propranolol, including herbal medicines.

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

 Tell your health professional if your child has ever had asthma or wheeziness, as propranolol may trigger asthma in a small number of children.

 Don't stop giving propranolol suddenly as your child may get a harmful increase in blood pressure or heart rate.

 When you get a new prescription of liquid medicine, check what strength you have and how much to give, as it may be different from the previous bottle.

- Your child's blood pressure and pulse rate will need to be measured regularly to check how propranolol is working. It is important that your child goes to these appointments.
- Propranolol is used to treat several different conditions in children. If you look for information on propranolol, make sure it relates to the condition your child has.

General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, speak to your health professional but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses.

Where should I keep this medicine?

- The liquid medicine does not keep for long once it has been opened. Write the date that you start it on the bottle and make sure you follow the instructions on the bottle about how long you can keep it.

Who to contact for more information

Your healthcare team can give you more information about propranolol and other medicines used to treat high blood pressure. You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111
Tel 111 [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

Northern Ireland: NI Direct
nidirect.gov.uk

Scotland: NHS 24
Tel 111 [nhs24.scot](https://www.nhs24.scot)

Children's Heart Federation
Tel 0300 5610065
chfed.org.uk

Wales: NHS 111 Wales
Tel 111 [111.wales.nhs.uk](https://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk