



ATENOLOL FOR HAEMANGIOMA: Information for families

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) describes how this medicine is given and some of its possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines so your child will not necessarily experience every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or telephone one of the contact numbers of this information sheet.

What is it for?

Atenolol belongs to a group of medicines known as beta blockers which narrow blood vessels to haemangiomas. This reduces blood flow and increases softness to the haemangioma, as well as reducing it in size.

A haemangioma is a collection of immature blood vessels, sometimes called 'strawberry marks' because the surface of some haemangiomas looks a bit like a strawberry.

Haemangiomas have been well treated with a beta blocker called propranolol, but this medicine is occasionally not tolerated due to side effects. In this case atenolol may be used instead.

How is it given?

Atenolol is available as an oral solution, and as tablets. If your child is taking the oral solution, you should use an oral syringe to draw up the correct dose. These instructions will be on the medicine label. Tablets are available for older children which are usually taken once a day.

The dose of atenolol is calculated on your child's weight so the dose will increase as they grow.

Treatment of haemangiomas with atenolol usually lasts until 14 to 18 months of age. When treatment is no longer needed, the dose of atenolol should be gradually reduced and not stopped suddenly.

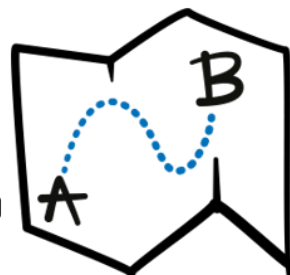
Whilst taking atenolol, we advise giving your child frequent feeds during the day. Babies must be woken during the night to have a milk feed.

What are the side-effects?

Side effects are uncommon, but atenolol can cause:

- Gastrointestinal disturbances such as constipation or diarrhoea.
- Slow heart rate or low blood pressure – signs of this may be dizziness or fainting.
- Cold extremities
- Weakness and fatigue, such as floppiness and lack of interest in surroundings
- Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)
- Sleep disturbances
- Wheezing or coughing

If you are concerned about any of these side effects, please discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.



Who should not take atenolol (contraindications)?

People with the following conditions should discuss taking atenolol with their doctor:

- Asthma
- Kidney disease
- Hypotension (low blood pressure)
- Diabetes or hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)
- Uncontrolled heart failure or heart block
- Raynaud's disease

Atenolol and other medications

The following medicines are known to interact with atenolol:

- Other medicines which slow the heart rate such as digoxin, verapamil and diltiazem
- Other medicines that reduce blood pressure such as diuretics, ACE inhibitors and calcium channel blockers
- Lignocaine – an ingredient in some teething gels should not be given to babies taking atenolol.

Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicines, including herbal or complementary medicines.

Important

- Keep medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- Keep medicines in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight and away from heat.
- If your doctor decides to stop treatment with atenolol, return any unused medicine to your pharmacist. Do not flush down the toilet or throw it away.
- If you forget to give your child a dose, give it as soon as you remember. Do not give a double dose if it is already time to give the next one.
- Your family doctor (GP) will need to give you a repeat prescription for atenolol.
- Some medicines will need to be ordered by your local pharmacist- ask your GP for another prescription with enough time (when you have about 2 weeks of your medicine left) to ensure you do not run out

For further information please contact:

Medicines Information: 020 7829 8608 or via the Medications page on the MyGOSH app (available Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)

Dermatology team via GOSH switchboard: 020 7405 9200 or via the MyGOSH app

Disclaimer

Please read this information sheet from GOSH alongside the patient information leaflet (PIL) provided by the manufacturer. If you do not have a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet please talk to your pharmacist. A few products do not have a marketing authorisation (licence) as a medicine and therefore there is no PIL. For children in particular, there may be conflicts of information between the manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) and guidance provided by GOSH and other healthcare providers. For example, some manufacturers may recommend, in the patient information leaflet, that a medicine is not given to children aged under 12 years. In most cases, this is because the manufacturer will recruit adults to clinical trials in the first instance and therefore the initial marketing authorisation (licence) only covers adults and older children.

For new medicines, the manufacturer then has to recruit children and newborns into trials (unless the medicine is not going to be used in children and newborns) and subsequently amend the PIL with the approved information. Older medicines may have been used effectively for many years in children without problems but the manufacturer has not been required to collect data and amend the licence. This does not mean that it is unsafe for children and young people to be prescribed such a medicine 'off-licence/off-label'. However, if you are concerned about any conflicts of information, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

