



Amiodarone: 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?

Amiodarone is a medicine used to treat abnormal heart rhythms called arrhythmias.

How is it given?

Amiodarone is usually given two or three times a day to begin with, then reduced to once a day. It is available as 100mg or 200mg tablets.

If your child can swallow tablets, they should be swallowed whole with water. If not, disperse the tablet(s) in water and give to your child to drink or use an oral syringe to squirt the dose gently into the side of your child's mouth. If your child needs a proportion of the tablet, disperse it in a specific volume of water then draw up the correct proportion of the liquid using the oral syringe provided. These instructions will be on the medicine label.

For example, if your child needs to take a 60mg dose each day:

1. Disperse a 100mg tablet in 10ml of water
2. Draw up 6ml of the liquid and give to your child
3. Throw the rest of the liquid away

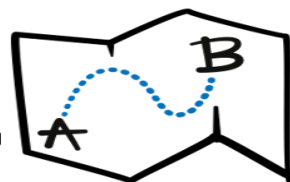
What are the side-effects?

- Nausea and vomiting (feeling or being sick), loss of appetite or constipation
- A metallic taste in the mouth

- Bradycardia (slow heart rate)
- Reversible micro corneal deposits, halo or blurred vision.
- Photophobia or visual impairment: if vision becomes impaired whilst taking amiodarone, please tell us.
- Skin rash, discoloration or photo sensitivity (skin can become sensitive to sunlight). People taking amiodarone should protect themselves from the sun by wearing protective clothing and using a broad-spectrum sun block.
- Abnormal thyroid function: if tiredness, heat or cold intolerance, weight gain or loss, heart pounding, light-headedness, restlessness or poor concentration develops while taking amiodarone, please tell us.
- Lung fibrosis or pneumonitis: if a cough, wheezing or difficulty breathing develops while taking amiodarone, please tell us.
- Liver impairment: please tell us if your child's skin develops a yellow tinge, they are passing brown or dark coloured urine, have excess sweating or weight loss.

The doctors will check thyroid, liver, lung function periodically while your child is taking amiodarone by taking a blood test.

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



Who should not take amiodarone (contraindications)?

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

- Pregnant, could be pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding
- Hypersensitivity to amiodarone or iodine (amiodarone contains iodine)
- Slow heart rate called bradycardia
- History of thyroid dysfunction
- Taking medication that prolongs the QT interval (see below under amiodarone and other medicines)

Amiodarone and other medications

Some medicines can interact with amiodarone.

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

The following are known to interact with amiodarone:

- Grapefruit juice can increase in amount of amiodarone absorbed from the stomach so is best avoided while taking amiodarone.
- St John's Wort
- Medicines that can slow the heart rate: beta-blockers, verapamil, diltiazem. These are sometimes prescribed alongside

amiodarone, but careful monitoring will be needed.

- Warfarin: amiodarone may increase the effect of warfarin. Additional blood tests are needed when amiodarone is started, increased or decreased or stopped.
- Anti-arrhythmic medicines
- Digoxin: the dose of digoxin will need to be adjusted if amiodarone is started
- Medicines that prolong the QT interval: other medicines that are used to control heart rhythms may need to be adjusted.

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 amiodarone, 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 amiodarone.
- 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)

Cardiology 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.

