



Furosemide: 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?

Furosemide belongs to a group of drugs called diuretics which increase the amount of urine produced. Furosemide is a medicine used in patients with heart and kidney problems to stop fluid building up in the body and so reduce the workload on the heart.

Furosemide helps the body remove excess water by increasing the amount of urine produced. Furosemide is often given with a weaker diuretic such as amiloride to prevent excess loss of body salts and potassium. Body salt levels (sodium and potassium) can be affected if a person takes diuretics long term so blood tests may be taken to check levels as required.

How is it given?

It may be given one, two, three or four times a day depending on your child's condition.

Furosemide is available in several different strengths as an oral liquid. At GOSH we use the 50mg in 5mLs strength. Please check that the same strength is given if repeat prescriptions are dispensed from your community pharmacy.

Tablets are available for older children and teenagers in 20mg, 40mg and 500mg strengths.

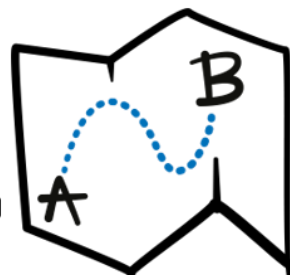
It will make your child pass more urine, so older children may prefer to take furosemide a few hours before bedtime to prevent them having to get up to go to the toilet in the night. You may also need to speak to your child's teacher if furosemide is given before school, as they may need to leave class more frequently to go to the toilet.

What are the side-effects?

Side effects are rare, but occasionally can include:

- Gastrointestinal disturbances (upset stomach)
- Skin rash and photosensitivity
- Hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar)
- Dizziness, headache, drowsiness
- Hearing impairment, tinnitus and deafness: this is usually if furosemide is given by the intravenous drip. If you suspect this, please tell us.

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



Who should not take furosemide (contraindications)?

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

- Pregnant, could be pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breast-feeding
- Allergy to sulphonamide drugs
- Addison's disease

Furosemide and other medications

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

The following medicines are known to react with furosemide:

- Digoxin
- Lithium
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen. Short term use is acceptable if

recommended for treatment by a health care professional. Please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before giving them to your child.

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 furosemide, return any unused medicine to the 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 your child vomits after taking the medicine, do not give a double dose.
- Your family doctor (GP) will need to give you a repeat prescription for furosemide. Some medicines will need to be ordered by your community pharmacy (chemist) so arrange this in plenty of time.

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.

