

Digoxin (Lanoxin[®], Sigmamaxin[®])

What is digoxin?

Digoxin belongs to a group of medicines known as cardiac glycosides. It is only available with a doctor's prescription.

What is it for?

Digoxin is used to treat certain types of irregular heartbeats (arrhythmia) and weakness of the heart (heart failure). It acts to slow the rate and increase the strength of your child's heartbeat.

How to take this medication

It is important that this medication is taken only as directed and not given to other people. Digoxin is usually prescribed for once daily administration, although in children it can be given twice daily. The dose will be adjusted to suit your child and monitoring of blood levels may be required to determine if the optimal dose is being administered. Digoxin should be taken at the same time each day, with or without food.

If using the paediatric liquid form of the medication (elixir), it is important to measure each dose accurately, as doses are usually small and the solution is quite concentrated. A calibrated measuring dropper which measures to 1 mL comes with each bottle of medicine or a syringe to measure the dose may be supplied.

What to do if a dose is missed

If it is almost time for the next dose (within 12 hours if using digoxin once a day or within 6 hours if giving digoxin twice a day), skip the missed dose and give the next one at the usual time.

Do not try to make up for a missed dose by giving more than one dose at a time. This can increase the risk of unwanted side effects. Seek advice from your child's doctor if 2 or more days of medicine have been missed.

Storing the medication

- 62.5 microg tablets (blue) – Store below 30°C
- 250 microg tablets (white) and paediatric elixir – Store below 25°C

It is important to keep digoxin locked away out of reach of children. Do not keep the tablets or liquid medicine in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp, warm places because this may make them less effective. Keep the tablets in the blister pack until it is time to give them.



Use of other medication

Digoxin can interact with several other medications. It is important to ask your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medication including those that you buy without a prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Important information

- Your child's doctor may ask you to check your child's pulse rate before each dose and to call if it is outside the recommended range.
- Your child may require blood tests to ensure the drug is given at the optimal dose.
- Do not stop giving this medication suddenly without first checking with the doctor.

Possible side effects

Side effects can occur while taking digoxin. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been changed. Some possible side effects include:

- loss of appetite
- nausea and vomiting
- headache
- diarrhoea
- visual disturbances
- skin rash.

These may also be early warning signs that your child's dose of digoxin is too high.

Contact your child's doctor as soon as possible if any of the following occur:

- irregular heartbeat or fainting
- trouble breathing
- unusual weakness or drowsiness
- nausea, vomiting, appetite loss or diarrhoea
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- visual disturbances such as yellow vision or halos around objects
- symptoms of an allergic reaction such as fever, rash, swelling of the face, lips, mouth, hands, feet or ankles, difficulty in swallowing or breathing and shortness of breath.

Commercially available dosage forms and strengths

- 62.5 microg (blue) and 250 microg (white) tablets.
- 50 microg/mL paediatric elixir (liquid medicine with calibrated dropper).

The PCH Pharmacy will advise you if they manufacture any additional dosage forms to the above.

If you have any concerns contact your child's doctor, or the PCH Pharmacy Department.

Dispensary: 6456 0190 – select option 2

Paediatric Medicines Information Service: 6456 0190 – select option 1

In case of overdose or poisoning contact the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26



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