

Propranolol

Information for parents and carers



Leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

This leaflet contains information about the use of propranolol in children for the treatment of haemangioma.

It tells you:

- how the medicine works
- how it should be given
- whether there are any side effects.

Please also read the leaflet called 'Medicines for Children - Unlicensed medicines for children' and any information provided by the manufacturer in the medicine package.

Why have I been given this leaflet?

The leaflet will help you to remember what your doctor has told you about this medicine. It will also help you to decide whether you want to go ahead with this treatment.

For most medicines, information is provided by the manufacturer in the medicine package. This medicine does not have a licence for use for the treatment of haemangiomas in children so the leaflet in the medicine package doesn't tell you everything you need to know. We have written this leaflet to give you some extra information.

So this medicine does not have a licence. What does this mean?

The 'Medicines for Children - Unlicensed medicines for children' leaflet tells you more about medicine licensing regulations. It also tells you why unlicensed medicines are sometimes used.

Why does propranolol not have a licence for the treatment of haemangiomas in children?

Sometimes a medicine has been licensed for a certain use in adults and later use shows that is useful for conditions in children. The manufacturer can choose whether they apply to the Government to have the more recent information added to the licence. This costs a lot of money and sometimes the manufacturer decides it is not worth their while.

Propranolol is made by the manufacturer for various heart conditions in adults. However it is also widely used in children.

Remember that your doctor will have thought carefully about which medicine is best for your child's condition.

What is propranolol and how does it work?

Propranolol is a beta blocker. Some nerves release a chemical called noradrenaline when they are stimulated which in turn stimulates 'beta adrenergic receptors'. This can cause a variety of effects. For example, if the beta adrenergic receptors in the heart are stimulated, the heart pumps harder and faster than before, so more blood is pumped around the body. Beta blocker medicines block the beta adrenergic receptors and stop them being stimulated.

By blocking the beta adrenergic receptors, propranolol can make blood vessels tighten, reducing the amount of blood flowing through them. This is particularly helpful in haemangiomas, as it reduces the blood flow through them, reducing the colour and making them softer. The cells that cause the growth of the haemangioma are also affected by propranolol so that the haemangioma starts to reduce in size. More research is needed to confirm that this is how propranolol works, but the beneficial effects are usually seen very quickly.

When should propranolol not be taken?

Your child should not have this medicine if they have a history of asthma or bronchospasm. Propranolol should also not be used in children prone to hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar).

How should I give propranolol?

You will be given a bottle of Propranolol 50mg/5ml liquid to give to your child at home labelled with the dose your doctor has advised is best to start on. Occasionally it might be decided that your child will be admitted to a paediatric day case ward for the first two days that propranolol is started. This is to allow us to check things like your child's heart and monitor the blood sugars and blood pressure if we think it is necessary.

You will go home with a bottle of Propranolol 50mg/5ml liquid. This will be labelled with the dose to continue at home until the next hospital clinic appointment. Your GP will be contacted and told about this medicine. They will be able to write a prescription for a further supply.

Your local pharmacy can order this medicine in for you, but it may take up to a week. Please make sure you order your prescription from your GP in plenty of time. We use Rosemont Pharmaceuticals to supply our liquid, which may be useful for your community pharmacy to know. Treatment may be continued for 12 to 18 months.

When you receive your liquid, please ensure the liquid is the same strength as the previous bottle. This is important so the same volume gives the same amount of propranolol for the dose.

Sometimes this medicine isn't suitable for children with certain conditions.

Please tell your doctor if your child has any of the conditions listed in the manufacturer's leaflet.

Are there any side-effects?

Most medicines cause side-effects. The manufacturer's leaflet contains a list of the known side-effects for this medicine. Everyone reacts differently to medicines. Your child may have some side-effects or none at all.

Will propranolol affect any other medicines?

Tell your child's doctor or pharmacist about all the other medicines your child takes. This includes any medicines prescribed by another doctor as well as medicines bought from a pharmacy or supermarket and any herbal remedies.

If your child is prescribed a new medicine, or you want to buy a medicine for your child, it is important that you tell the doctor or pharmacist about all the medicines that your child takes, including propranolol.

You should also tell your child's dentist next time you see him/her.

Where should I store propranolol at home?

Store propranolol liquid in a cool, dry place, away from direct sunlight.

It is important that all medicines are stored out of reach of children.

Where do I get a further supply?

Further supplies are available from your GP. Ask your GP to write a prescription when you have at least a week's supply left and take the prescription to your local pharmacy in good time. The pharmacy may not have the medicine in stock and may need a few days to arrange a supply.

Usually your bottle of propranolol should be replaced three months after opening, if the medicine bottle isn't finished in that time. This is dependant on the manufacturer, so please check each bottle for the information about how long the bottle should be used after opening.

How can I find out more?

Your agreement should be obtained, whenever possible, before prescribing any medicine for your child.

This leaflet has been written to provide general information about propranolol in children. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist.



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© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition (Ver 1)
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Medicine) Original production date: March 2012
Reviewed: November 2021 Catherine Bell - Advanced Clinical Pharmacist
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Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20220120_006/JG

LN005188
Publication date
12/2022
Review date
12/2025