



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Digoxin

Pharmacy and Cardiology Directorate

You have been given a medicine called digoxin.

Why has my doctor given me digoxin and what are the benefits?

Digoxin is used to treat a weak heart (known as heart failure) or an irregular heartbeat (known as atrial fibrillation).

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you need digoxin.

How does it work?

Digoxin makes the heart beat more slowly and regularly. It makes the heart beat stronger by strengthening the pumping action of the heart.

How should I take my digoxin?

Always follow the instructions on the label. Do not stop taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to. You should swallow digoxin tablets whole with water.

You should usually take digoxin once daily and it is best if you take it at the same time each day.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for the next dose, do not take the one you missed. Take the next dose at the usual time.

Do not double the next dose.

What are the risks of digoxin?

There are risks and benefits of taking all medicines however your doctor will discuss why there are more benefits than risks for you taking digoxin. There are some side effects to all medicines however some of these can be greater if the level of digoxin in your blood is raised. This can be measured by a blood test.

What are the side effects of digoxin?

All medicines have side effects. Not everybody will experience side effects.

However, some people may experience:

- Feeling sick and being sick.
- Diarrhoea.
- Loss of appetite.
- Sight problems.

If you are sick and have diarrhoea for more than one day and there is no likely cause, you should see your doctor. This is important if your heart is also beating very fast or very slowly. The side effects are often a result of having increased drug levels in your blood and your doctor will be able to adjust your dose to correct this.

Can I take other medicines while taking digoxin?

Some other medicines may affect how digoxin works.

It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines, including ones that you buy.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

There are other medicines to treat heart failure and atrial fibrillation however if your doctor has prescribed digoxin this may be the most appropriate medicine for you but please discuss this with your doctor. If you have any side effects, there may be an alternative that your doctor can prescribe.

What will happen if I decide not to have digoxin?

If you decide not to have digoxin you will not get any of the benefits. You must discuss this with your doctor as they need to know if you are not taking it and may prescribe an alternative.

This leaflet is not a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

You can get more detailed information from the manufacturer's information leaflet.

Further Information

**Further information on this medicine is available from the Medicines Information Department of the Royal Liverpool University Hospital
Telephone number: 0151 706 2096
Text phone number 18001 0151 2096**

NHS website www.nhs.uk

NHS Direct:

**For free advice and information on any health matter 24 hours a day, seven days a week, please
Tel: 0845 4647**

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