



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Diuretics (water tablets)

Pharmacy and Cardiology Directorates

‘Diuretics’ is the name given to a group of medicines.

Your diuretic is called:

.....

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

Diuretics can be used to treat many different conditions, for example, water retention, high blood pressure or heart failure.

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you have been prescribed a diuretic.

How do they work?

Diuretics remove excess water from the body so you may find that you have to go to the toilet more often to pass water. By removing excess water they can reduce your blood pressure.

They can help to reduce symptoms of heart failure by removing fluid from the lungs, making breathing easier and reducing swelling of the ankles.

How should I take my diuretic?

Always follow the instructions on the label. You should usually take these medicines in the morning. If you have been asked to take them twice a day, take the second dose early in the afternoon. Do not take them at night otherwise you may have to wake up to go to the toilet.

Do **not** alter the amount of fluid that you normally drink while you are taking this medicine (a normal amount is 2½ to 3½ pints a day or 1½ to 2 litres a day) unless advised by your doctor.

If you have diarrhoea and vomiting or are at risk of dehydration, e.g. in very hot weather, please contact your doctor as you may need a change to your dose of diuretic.

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 diuretics?

There are risks and benefits of taking all medicines however your doctor will discuss with you why there are more benefits than risks for you taking a diuretic. There are some side effects to all medicines.

What are the side effects of diuretics?

All drugs have side effects. Not everyone will experience them.

Some people may experience:

- Feeling sick.
- Dizziness.
- A rash.
- Muscle cramps.

With all diuretics your doctor will want to do regular blood tests and may change the dose or type of medication depending on the result.

Some diuretics can remove too much of a substance called potassium from your body; this will also be checked with a blood test.

If this happens to you, your doctor may change your diuretic to one that stops you losing potassium or may give you potassium tablets.

Diuretics may interfere with your blood sugar levels. This may be more apparent if you have diabetes so take extra care to check the sugar levels in your blood or urine and if your sugar levels are higher than usual, see your doctor as soon as you can.

Can I take other medicines while taking diuretics?

Some other medicines may affect how diuretics work. It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any other medicines, including ones that you buy. Avoid buying salt substitutes such as lo-salt or ruthmol.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

There are other medicines available however if your doctor has prescribed a diuretic this may be the most appropriate medicine for you. If you have side effects, there may be an alternative that your doctor can prescribe.

What will happen if I decide not to have a diuretic?

If you decide not to take the medicine 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 for you.

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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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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