



Diazepam for muscle spasm

This leaflet is about the use of diazepam for painful muscle spasm and stiffness. This may be due to cerebral palsy or other conditions.



This leaflet has been written specifically for parents and carers about the use of this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adult patients. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Do not stop giving diazepam suddenly, as this may cause serious side-effects.

Name of drug

Diazepam

Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Diazepam will help your child's muscles to relax. This should help to reduce muscle pain.

What is diazepam available as?

- **Tablets:** 2 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 2 mg in 5 mL, or can be ordered specially from your pharmacist as a strong oral solution

When should I give diazepam?

Give your child **two doses** each day. This is usually one in the morning and one in the evening. Ideally these times should be 10–12 hours apart, for example between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8 pm.

You and your doctor will work out when and how often to give diazepam to suit your child.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of diazepam (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

It may take a while to find the right dose that relaxes the muscles but without making your child floppy. You and your doctor will work out the right dose together.

 **It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablet.



Liquid medicine: Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.

When should the medicine start working?

Your child's muscles should begin to feel less pain about 15 minutes after taking a dose of diazepam.

The muscles will start to relax when your child has been taking diazepam regularly for a few days.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of diazepam, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of diazepam, you **do not** need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If you forget to give a dose of diazepam, give it as soon as you remember. But, if the next normal dose is due within 4 hours, do not give this next dose, as you risk giving your child too much. Then return to your normal dosing times.

For example, imagine that you usually give diazepam to your child at about 8 am and 8 pm. If you forget to give the morning dose but remember before 4 pm (i.e. 4 hours before the evening dose is due), give them the morning dose and give them the evening dose at 8 pm, as usual. **But** if you remember the morning dose after 4 pm, give that missed dose when you remember, but do not give the usual evening dose. Return to your normal dosing routine in the morning.

What if I give too much?

 It can be dangerous to give your child too much diazepam.

If you think your child may have had too much diazepam, contact your doctor or take your child to hospital **straight away**.

Tell the doctor that they may have had too much diazepam. Take the medicine or packet with you, so that the doctor can see what has been taken. Have the packet with you if you telephone for advice.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child is very sleepy, or if they have problems breathing, they may have had too much diazepam. Take them to hospital **straight away**.

Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may be more sleepy than usual. This will get better when they have been taking diazepam for a few days.
- If your child becomes floppy, they may be taking too much diazepam. Contact your doctor if this happens.

- Your child may have difficulty controlling their movements (ataxia) or walking, may develop difficulty talking, become irritable or show odd behaviour, or they may feel light-headed (as if they may faint). Diazepam may make these symptoms worse in children who already have them. Contact your doctor if this happens.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard>.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as diazepam?

- Diazepam can make your child sleepy, so do not give your child any other drugs that also have this effect, such as some medicines for hay fever.
- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

 Do not suddenly stop giving diazepam, as this can cause severe side-effects.

- You may have heard that some people become addicted to or dependent on diazepam. This is unlikely to happen when diazepam is given to children for pain or spasms.
- An antidote can be given to someone who has had too much diazepam. This has to be done in hospital.

General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.

 If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact a doctor straight away.

- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about diazepam and about pain relief for spasticity.

You can also get more information from:

England

NHS 111: 111 - www.nhs.uk

Scotland

NHS24: 111 - www.nhs24.com

Wales/Galw Lechyd Cymru

NHS Direct 0845 4647 - www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland

NI Direct - www.nidirect.gov.uk

Scope (for people living with cerebral palsy)

0808 800 3333 - www.scope.org.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



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The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.