

Amiodarone (Cordarone®)

How does this medicine work?

Amiodarone (a-mee-oh-da-rone) is used to control abnormal heartbeats that can make an irregular or fast rhythm. A normal rhythm improves the blood and oxygen supply to the body, and gives your child more energy.

How should I give it?

Amiodarone comes as a pill, but your pharmacy may make a liquid form for you.

It is usually given once a day. Give it at regular times to keep a steady level in the bloodstream. Your child should be awake and alert when taking any medicine. Follow the checked instructions below.

If using the liquid form, shake well right before using. Draw up the correct amount in the medicine dropper or oral syringe. Give a small squirt of the medicine inside the cheek. To avoid choking, let your child swallow each squirt before giving more.

For babies, you may want to mix the medicine with a small amount of formula or breast milk and give it with a bottle nipple before feeding. Do not add medicine to a whole bottle because if your baby does not finish it, you will not know how much of the medicine was taken.

For children who cannot swallow pills:

- Crush it between 2 spoons, inside a plastic bag, or in folded paper.
- Mix the powder with a **very small** amount (about 1 teaspoon) of soft food such as applesauce, chocolate syrup, ice cream, jelly, or yogurt.

Other instructions:

Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

Amiodarone may be taken with food to decrease stomach upset. Do not take this medicine with grapefruit juice.

Check with the doctor, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist before giving **any** other prescription or non-prescription medicines, herbs, or vitamins.

What should I do if a dose is missed?

If a dose is missed and you remember within 2 hours, give the missed dose as soon as possible. However, if more than 2 hours have passed, skip the missed dose. Give the next regular dose when it is due. **Never** give a double dose.

If your child vomits (throws up) within 30 minutes after a dose, give it again. If your child vomits after 30 minutes, do not repeat the dose.

Call the cardiology clinic if your child misses or vomits 2 doses in a row.

What are the side effects?

- blue-gray coloring of the skin
- skin sensitive to the sun
- cramps
- cough
- decreased energy level
- increased tiredness
- muscle weakness
- trembling or shaking
- upset stomach

To prevent sunburn, use sunscreen, a hat, and protective clothing when outdoors.

When should I call the doctor?

- shortness of breath
- jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
- dizziness or fainting
- irregular heartbeat
- trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

Do not suddenly stop giving this medicine without checking with your doctor. It may result in a serious change in the heart rhythm.

Your cardiologist may order amiodarone blood level tests to be sure the dose is correct. Remember to schedule these to be done just before a dose is due.

Amiodarone can sometimes have effects on the liver and thyroid gland, so your doctor will check these organs at times with blood tests.

You and your child should know the names of all the medicines he or she is taking. **Share this information** with anyone involved in your child's care. Please remember to bring the medicine container when your child comes to the clinic or emergency department.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Each time you refill your prescriptions, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left, the pharmacist will need 2 or 3 days to contact the clinic to renew the prescription.

Before giving the first dose, read the label. Be sure it is what was prescribed. After a refill, if the medicine looks different to you, ask your pharmacist about it before giving it.

Check the label and expiration date before giving each dose. Ask your pharmacist what to do with outdated or unused medicines. If there is no "take-back" program, put them in the garbage.

Store all medicines in their original container and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children's reach, locked up if possible.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. If your child is unconscious or has a seizure, **call 911**.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call your cardiologist or pharmacist.