

Clonidine (Catapres®)

How does this medicine work?

Clonidine is in a group of medicines called alpha-agonists. By regulating brain activity, it has a calming effect in children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It can also be used for other conditions, such as tics, aggression, or sleep problems.

It may also be used to treat high blood pressure, pain in hands and feet, or other conditions.

How should I give it?

Clonidine comes in pills and transdermal (skin) patches. It can also be made into liquid by your pharmacist.

The dose must be changed gradually. **Do not** stop the medicine without checking with your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Give it at regular times to keep a steady level in the bloodstream. With tablets, the last dose of medicine may be given at bedtime to avoid being very tired during the day.

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 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. Make sure your child takes all of the mixture.

Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

You can give it with or without food.

Avoid alcohol-containing foods, beverages, or non-prescription medicines (such as cough syrup) while taking this medicine.

There are certain medicines that interact with clonidine. Please 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?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember, unless it is less than 6 hours before the next dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and continue with the regular schedule. **Never give a double dose.** If your child misses two doses, call the clinic.

If your child vomits within 30 minutes after a dose, please call the clinic for instructions.

What are the side effects?

- Common
- drowsiness
 - lightheadedness
 - dizziness
 - headache
 - dry mouth
 - nausea (upset stomach)
 - vomiting (throwing up)
- Occasional
- tiredness
 - weakness
 - constipation (hard stools)
 - diarrhea (loose stools)
 - dry eyes
 - blurred vision
 - nightmares

The person taking this medicine **should not** drive, operate machinery, or do anything else that could be dangerous until it is clear that no risky side effects are present.

When should I call the doctor?

- vomiting (if due to this medicine)
- irregular heartbeat
- rash or itching
- swelling in feet or lower legs
- very dizzy or lightheaded
- fainting
- blood in urine
- shortness of breath

What else do I need to know?

This medicine may affect your child's blood pressure. Check with your doctor or nurse practitioner **before stopping** this medicine. It must be stopped gradually to avoid high blood pressure.

If using the patch, be sure to remove it before a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, to prevent skin burns at the patch site.

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 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 prescription, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left, the pharmacy will need 2 or 3 days to contact the clinic to renew the prescription.

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 empty them into the trash.

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 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 clinic or pharmacy.

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
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