

Medicines for Children: information for parents and carers

Baclofen for muscle spasm



This leaflet is about the use of baclofen for severe muscle spasm (spasticity). This may be due to cerebral palsy or other conditions that affect the brain or spinal cord.

This leaflet has been written specifically for parents and carers about the use of this medicine in children. The information may differ from that provided by the manufacturer. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Do not stop giving baclofen suddenly, as this will cause serious side-effects.

Name of drug

Baclofen

Common brands: Baclospas®, Lioresal®, Lyflex®

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

Baclofen will help your child's muscles to relax. This will help your child to move, and make it easier and less painful for you to move them. Baclofen may also help to reduce muscle pain.

What is baclofen available as?

- tablets (10 mg)
- liquid medicine (1 mg in mL)

Different tablets or medicines may contain different ingredients in addition to baclofen. Read the packet or leaflet that comes with it to find out if the medicine contains anything that your child should not have.

Baclofen can also be given using a special pump that injects the drug into the fluid around the spinal cord. This is called intrathecal treatment.

When should I give baclofen?

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

How much should I give?

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

You will start by giving your child a small amount and then increase the dose bit by bit. Your doctor will ask you how well the medicine is working, and may suggest that you change the amount you give, or when you give it, to get the best effect. If you think the dose is not right, talk to your doctor.

⚠ It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions.

How should I give baclofen?

Give your child something to eat after taking baclofen tablets or medicine.



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, juice or similar. Your child should not chew the tablets. Your doctor may have told you to give half or quarter of a tablet.



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

Intrathecal pump: Your doctor will set the dose that the pump delivers.

When should the medicine start working?

Your child's muscles should begin to feel less stiff after taking baclofen regularly for 3–4 days. It may take up to 10 days for the maximum effect.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

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

What if I forget to give it?

If you forget to give a dose, your child's muscles may become a little stiffer. Give the dose as soon as you remember. Wait **at least 4 hours** before giving the next dose.

What if I give too much?

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



If you think your child may have had too much baclofen, contact your doctor or take your child to hospital.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children feel better, but sometimes they have unwanted effects (side-effects).

Side-effects you need to do something about



If your child has a seizure (also called a fit or convulsion) or is very sleepy or difficult to wake up, they may have had too much baclofen. **Take them to hospital straight away.**



If your child has difficulty breathing, **take them to hospital straight away.**

Tell the doctor that your child is taking baclofen. Take the medicine or packet with you.

Other side-effects you need to know about it

- If your child is confused, can't sleep or has nightmares, or seems anxious or shaky, contact your doctor.
- Your child may be more sleepy than usual, they may feel sick, and they may find it hard to pass urine (have a wee).
- Your child may feel light-headed when moving from lying down to sitting up. Tell your doctor if this happens, as your child's blood pressure may be a bit low.
- If your child's muscles become floppy (hypotonic), contact your doctor, as you may need to give less baclofen.

Can other common medicines be given at the same time as baclofen?

- ⚠️ **Do not** give your child ibuprofen, as this may make the side-effects of baclofen worse.
- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol, 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 baclofen, as your child may get serious side-effects.
- If your doctor decides that baclofen is not right for your child, you will need to reduce the dose bit by bit over a few weeks so that your child doesn't get side-effects. Do not reduce the dose without talking to your doctor first.
- If your child is already taking other medicines, tell your doctor before starting baclofen.
- If your child has kidney problems, tell your doctor before starting baclofen.
- Baclofen may not be suitable for children with stomach ulcers, mental health problems or who have difficulty passing urine (having a wee). If your child has any of these conditions, tell your doctor.

General advice

- If baclofen does not seem to be controlling your child's spasms, contact your doctor for advice.
- Only give this medicine to *your* child. Never give it to anyone else, even if they seem to have the same condition, as you are likely to do them harm.

⚠️ If you think someone else may have taken baclofen by accident, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647) straight away for advice.

- Try to give baclofen at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- 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 is not older than the 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep all medicines where children cannot see or reach them.
- Keep this medicine somewhere cool and dry, away from direct heat and light. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

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

You can also get information from these organisations.

Scope (for people living with cerebral palsy)
www.scope.org.uk
0808 800 3333

NHS Direct
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
0845 4647

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

WellChild 
the national charity for sick children

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We have written this leaflet to help you understand more about the medicine you are giving to your child. We take great care to make sure that the information is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is therefore important that you follow the advice of your doctor or pharmacist, as they understand your child's illness. If you are not sure about something, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Note that this leaflet applies to the use of medicines in the UK; it may not apply in 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 the leaflet.