

Medicines for Children: information for parents and carers

Diclofenac for pain and inflammation



This leaflet is about the use of diclofenac to reduce mild-to-moderate pain and inflammation. This might be after an injury, or due to a long-term condition such as juvenile arthritis.

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.

If your child is allergic to other drugs for inflammation or has asthma, check with your doctor before giving this medicine.

Name of drug

Diclofenac sodium (often referred to as diclofenac)

Common brands: Coflam[®], Defenac[®], Dicloflex[®], Diclovol[®], Diclozip[®], Fenactol[®], Flamrase[®], Lofensaid[®], Volraman[®], Voltarol[®]

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

Diclofenac will help your child to feel less pain. It works best for inflammation and long-term pain when taken regularly for a few days.

What is diclofenac available as?

- Tablets (25 mg, 50 mg)
- Dispersible tablets (10 mg, 50 mg),
- Suppositories (12.5 mg, 25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg)

When should I give diclofenac?

- Diclofenac tablets are usually given three times a day. This should be first thing in the morning, early afternoon and at bedtime. Ideally, these times are at least 4 hours apart.
- Suppositories are given twice a day. This should be one in the morning, and one at bedtime. Ideally these times should be 10–12 hours apart.
- Your doctor will tell you how often to give diclofenac to your child.

How much should I give?

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

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

How should I give it?

Ideally, give diclofenac tablets to your child after a meal or some food, as it is less likely to upset their stomach. Avoid giving it on an empty stomach.



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



Dispersible tablets: You can dissolve the powder in water or squash. Your doctor or pharmacist will have told you how much liquid to use, and how much to give your child. Give the mixture to your child straight away, using a medicine spoon or oral syringe.



Suppositories:

- Wash your hands with soap and hot water.
- Unwrap the suppository.
- Your child should be lying on his or her side or front.

- Hold one buttock gently to one side so that you can see the back passage.
- Hold the suppository with the rounded end close to the back passage.
- Use one finger to push the suppository gently into the back passage. It needs to go in by about 2 cm.
- Your child should stay lying down for about 15 minutes so that the suppository doesn't come out.
- Wash your hands again with soap and hot water.

If your child empties their bowels (does a poo) within 30 minutes of inserting a suppository, you will need to insert another one.

When will the medicine start working?

- Your child should start to feel less pain within an hour of taking diclofenac.
- If your child is taking diclofenac for inflammation, they will need to take it regularly for about 3 weeks for it to work properly. For arthritis, it may take up to 12 weeks for the full benefit to be felt.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

Tablets

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

Suppository

- If your child is sick at any time, you do not need to give them another dose, as the suppository will still work.

What if I forget to give it?

- If your child is still in pain, give the missed dose as soon as you remember.
- You must then wait **at least 6 hours** before giving the next dose.

⚠ Never give a 'double' dose of diclofenac.

What if I give too much?

If you think you may have given your child an extra dose of diclofenac by mistake, wait **at least 12 hours** before giving another dose.

⚠ If your child may have had more than a double dose of diclofenac, or you are not sure, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647), or take your child to hospital straight away.

- Take the medicine container or pack with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the doctor. Have the packet with you if you telephone for advice.

- If your child has heart, kidney or liver disease, you must be particularly careful not to give too much diclofenac.

Are there any possible side-effects?

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

Side-effects that you must do something about



If your child gets bad stomach pain, brings up (vomits) blood or their stools (poo) are very dark, contact your doctor straight away or take your child to hospital. They may have an ulcer.

Other side-effects you need to know about

- Diclofenac may cause stomach pain, indigestion and heartburn, and your child may feel sick or be sick (vomit). You can help to reduce this by giving diclofenac with food.
- If these symptoms carry on, they may be signs of irritation to the stomach and oesophagus (food pipe). Contact your doctor if this happens.
- Your child may get diarrhoea.
- Diclofenac suppositories may irritate your child's bottom.

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

Do not give your child medicines that contain ibuprofen.

- 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

Diclofenac is one of a group of drugs called 'non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs' (NSAIDs). If your child has previously reacted to other drugs of this type, you should tell your doctor before starting diclofenac.

Diclofenac can make asthma worse in some children, but this is very rare.

- Occasionally diclofenac can cause bleeding or a stomach ulcer when taken regularly for long periods of time. Give diclofenac to your child with some food to help prevent this.
- Your child's skin may become more sensitive to sunlight. Keep them out of strong sun, and use a high-factor sun block (at least SPF 15). It is particularly important to avoid sunburn. They should not go on a sun bed.

General advice

- If diclofenac does not seem to be helping your child's pain, 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 could do them harm.
- If you think someone else may have taken diclofenac by accident, contact your doctor for advice.
- Try to give the medicine at about the same times each day, to help you remember. Write down the times that you give doses.
- 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 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 child's doctor or pharmacist will be able to give you more information about diclofenac and other medicines used to treat pain and inflammation.

You can also get more information from NHS Direct (0845 4647, www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk).

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

WellChild
the national charity for sick children

(Version 1, February 2008) © NPPG, RCPCH and WellChild 2008, all rights reserved.

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.