



## Atenolol: Information for families

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) describes how this medicine is given and some of its possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines so your child will not necessarily experience every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or telephone one of the contact numbers of this information sheet.

### What is it for?

**Atenolol** belongs to a group of medicines called beta blockers.

Atenolol is a medicine used in patients with heart problems to lower the blood pressure and lower the heart rate.

- Cold fingers and toes: beta blockers can reduce the blood flow to these areas.
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Sleep disturbances such as bad dreams and difficulty sleeping
- Low mood

If you are concerned about any of these side effects, please discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

### How is it given?

Atenolol is usually taken once or twice a day.

It is available as 25mg, 50mg or 100mg tablets, or a liquid (25mg in 5mLs). Small doses can be given using an oral syringe provided. It is important not to stop taking atenolol suddenly.

### What are the side effects?

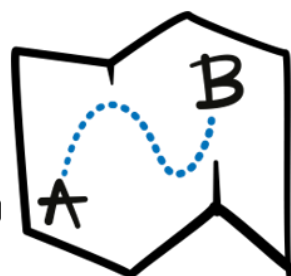
Atenolol is usually well tolerated, but possible side effects include:

- Gastrointestinal disturbances such as indigestion and constipation
- Dizziness or fainting could be a sign of low blood pressure or slow heart rate. Please see your doctor for a check if this occurs.

### Who should not take atenolol (contraindications)?

People with the following conditions should discuss taking atenolol with their doctor:

- Asthma
- Kidney impairment
- Diabetes or low blood glucose
- Uncontrolled heart failure or heart block
- Pregnant, could be pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breast-feeding
- Raynaud's disease



## Atenolol and other medications

Some medicines can interact with atenolol.

**Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicines, including herbal or complementary medicines.**

The following medicines are known to react with atenolol

- Other medicines that slow the heart rate such as digoxin, verapamil and diltiazem
- Other medicines that reduce blood pressure such as diuretics, ACE inhibitors and calcium channel blockers

## Important

- Keep medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- Keep medicines in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight and away from heat.
- If your doctor decides to stop treatment with atenolol, return any unused medicine to your pharmacist. Do not flush down the toilet or throw it away.
- If you forget to give your child a dose, give it as soon as you remember. Do not give a double dose if it is already time to give the next one.
- Your family doctor (GP) will need to give you a repeat prescription for atenolol.
- Some medicines will need to be ordered by your local pharmacist- ask your GP for another prescription with enough time (when you have about 2 weeks left of medicine) to ensure you do not run out.

**For further information please contact:**

**Medicines Information: 020 7829 8608** or via the Medications page on the MyGOSH app (available Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)

Cardiology team via GOSH switchboard: 020 7405 9200 or via the MyGOSH app

## **Disclaimer**

Please read this information sheet from GOSH alongside the patient information leaflet (PIL) provided by the manufacturer. If you do not have a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet please talk to your pharmacist. A few products do not have a marketing authorisation (licence) as a medicine and therefore there is no PIL.

For children in particular, there may be conflicts of information between the manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) and guidance provided by GOSH and other healthcare providers. For example, some manufacturers may recommend, in the patient information leaflet, that a medicine is not given to children aged under 12 years. In most cases, this is because the manufacturer will recruit adults to clinical trials in the first instance and therefore the initial marketing authorisation (licence) only covers adults and older children.

For new medicines, the manufacturer then has to recruit children and newborns into trials (unless the medicine is not going to be used in children and newborns) and subsequently amend the PIL with the approved information. Older medicines may have been used effectively for many years in children without problems but the manufacturer has not been required to collect data and amend the licence. This does not mean that it is unsafe for children and young people to be prescribed such a medicine 'off-licence/off-label'. However, if you are concerned about any conflicts of information, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

