



Patient information service
Bristol Heart Institute
Adult congenital heart disease

Furosemide



Respecting everyone
Embracing change
Recognising success
Working together
Our hospitals.

What is furosemide for?

Furosemide (pronounced 'furo-zee-mide') belongs to the group of medicines known as 'loop diuretics', also referred to as 'water tablets'. Furosemide helps to remove fluid from the body by increasing the amount of urine that is produced.

Furosemide is used to get rid of fluid and protect your heart from working too hard, which can lead to heart failure.

It is used to treat oedema (water retention) and is also sometimes used to treat hypertension (high blood pressure).

Furosemide may be used after cardiac surgery for a few months.

How does it work?

Furosemide prevents the build up of fluid by increasing the amount of urine produced by your kidneys.

If the heart becomes less efficient at pumping blood around the body, fluid leaks out of the blood vessels, causing swelling in the tissues of the lungs, feet and ankles.

Furosemide will make you need to pass urine more frequently.

Having too much salt in your food can stop the furosemide from working well.

Before taking furosemide

Make sure your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- **if you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding**
- if you have kidney problems, difficulty passing urine, or are dehydrated
- if you have prostate or liver problems
- if you have gout or diabetes
- if you have been told you have low sodium or potassium levels in your blood
- if you are taking other medicines, including those available to buy without a prescription, herbal and complementary medicines
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to this or any other medicine.

How is it to be taken?

Take your furosemide exactly as your doctor tells you to.

Try to take furosemide at the same time(s) each day to avoid missing any doses.

Furosemide will make you pass urine more often, so your doctor will usually advise that you take your dose in the morning so it doesn't disturb your sleep. If you take more than one dose each day, take the last dose before 6pm in the evening.

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you do not remember until after 6pm in the evening, skip the missed dose and continue taking it at the usual times the next day.

Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Be aware...

Diuretics help you to lose water. Occasionally you may lose too much and become dehydrated, leaving you feeling thirsty and your skin looking and feeling dry. Let your doctor know if this happens.

It is important to weigh yourself regularly, and to do so first thing in the morning. Keep a record of your weight.

The potassium in your blood should be monitored – it may become too low or too high, and blood tests may be needed to check this.

If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

Are there any side effects?

Possible side effects

Stomach upset

- stick to simple or bland foods, and avoid rich or spicy foods.

Dizziness or feeling faint, especially when getting up from sitting or lying down

- getting up slowly should help. If you begin to feel dizzy, lie down so that you do not faint, then sit for a few minutes before standing up.

Dry mouth

- try chewing sugar-free gum or sweets.

Blurred vision, tiredness, ringing in the ears, skin rash, increased sensitivity to sunlight, weakness, and dehydration

- if any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor.

You may wish to write down any questions you have for your cardiologist or GP:

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Specialist nurse contact information:

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Website for more information

<http://www.patient.co.uk/medicine/furosemide>

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokefree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While under our care, you may be invited to take part in research. To find out more please visit:
www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation
or call the research and innovation team on
0117 342 0233.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/

Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000



Minicom: 0117 934 9869



www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please call the patient information service:



0117 342 3728 / 3725

