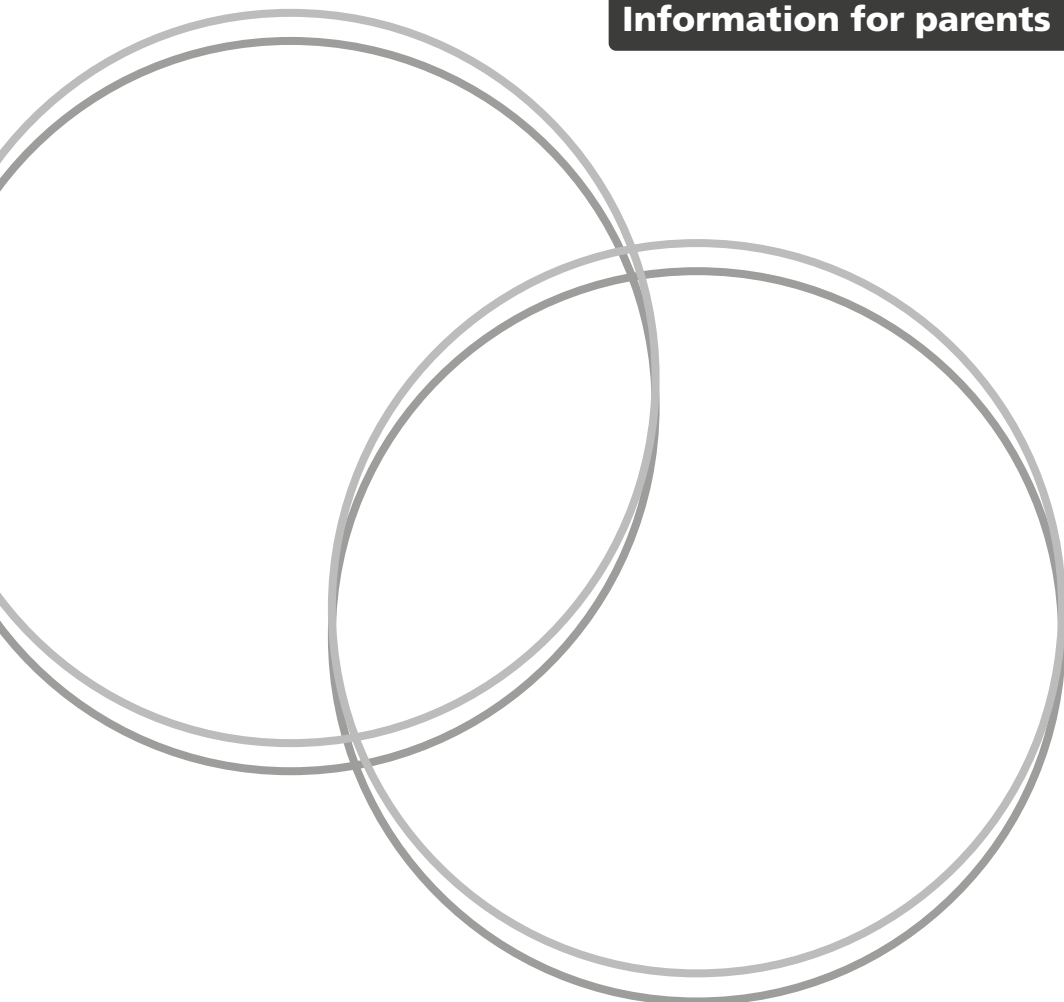


Propranolol Treatment for Infantile Haemangioma

Information for parents



What is haemangioma?

An infantile haemangioma is a collection of small blood vessels under the skin. They are also known as a strawberry naevus or 'strawberry mark'. The blood vessels can be a combination of different shades of red. They appear shortly after birth and grow over the first few months of life. They then often shrink over time.

What is propranolol?

Propranolol is a type of drug called a beta-blocker. It is a liquid medication that is swallowed. It is often also given to children for other medical problems.

Why does my child need treatment?

Haemangiomas often get better without treatment. However, occasionally a haemangioma will cause problems that need treatment. For example, if it is near your child's eye, it could affect their vision. Haemangiomas can also occasionally ulcerate (skin breaks down) which increases the risk of infection and is painful. In these cases, treatment can improve your child's symptoms.

Is it safe?

Lots of people around the country are now using this treatment, as it is thought to have fewer side effects than other existing treatments. Although this is a relatively new treatment for haemangiomas, propranolol has been used safely and effectively for years in much higher doses, by paediatricians for children with cardiac (heart) problems.

How long will my child need to take propranolol?

Your child will need to be treated with propranolol throughout the 'growing phase' of the haemangioma.

This is normally until your child is between one and two years of age. If propranolol is stopped too early, then the haemangioma can occasionally start to grow again. If this does happen, we can restart the propranolol treatment.

At each clinic follow-up appointment we will assess how the treatment is working.

What are the side effects?

Most children can take this medicine without experiencing any side effects, however occasionally it can cause side effects such as:

- disturbed sleep
- tummy ache
- blue fingertips
- wheeze and cough
- a slow heart rate.

Rarely, children can develop low blood sugar levels. Look for the following signs:

- increased sweating
- shakiness
- a big increase or drop in hunger levels.

Seek medical attention immediately from either your GP or local Emergency Department if your child is showing any of the symptoms.

What should I do to avoid low blood sugar levels?

Give the propranolol with a feed or meal to help avoid your child's blood sugar becoming low. Avoid long periods without a feed or something to eat. If your child is less than three months old, try to make sure that they feed at least once every five hours. If your child is over three months old, make sure they feed or have something to eat at least once every eight hours.

What if my child has another illness while taking propranolol?

Propranolol may need to be stopped temporarily during illnesses that could cause wheeziness; if your child is not eating and drinking well; or if they are being sick (vomiting).

Can my child take other medicines at the same time?

Always ask your doctor before giving your child other medicines while they are taking propranolol. Teething gels containing lidocaine should be avoided while taking propranolol. Some asthma treatments (such as salbutamol) should not be taken at the same time because they will not work. If your child has asthma and needs treatment then a different medicine will be used.

What do I need to do next?

In the majority of cases, it is safe to start this medication at home as advised by your doctor. We advise starting with a half dose on the first day, then increase to the full dose after 24 hours. We will give you specific instructions about the dose for your child as this is weight based.

In some cases, such as, if your child was born premature, with a low birth weight or has other medical problems, we like to start the medication in our Paediatric Day Unit (see below).

Hospital initiation

In some cases, we will arrange for you to bring your child into the Paediatric Day Unit for their first dose. This will just be half of the normal dose. We will then monitor your child for three to four hours after they have taken the half dose. Following this, you will be able to give your child the half dose of propranolol at home, three times a day with food, for one week.

After one week, you will need to bring your child back to the paediatric Day Unit again, where we will give them the full dose and monitor them once more. After this, you can continue to give your child the full dose of propranolol at home and we will see them every few months to check how the treatment is going. The reason we ask for your child to come into hospital when starting treatment, is so that we can monitor for any side effects.

Picking up the prescription

When you collect your child's prescription it is important to check the label with the pharmacist.

Propranolol liquid comes in two strengths. It is important to use the same strength for each prescription. **The two strengths are 5mg per 5ml and 50mg per 5ml.** If you are not sure about the strength your child should be taking, please talk to your child's GP.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your child's consultant on the telephone number below or speak to your child's GP.

Paediatric Dermatologist's secretary

Telephone: **01865 226 864**

01865 223 937

(Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm).

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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