

Department of Dermatology

Topical timolol treatment for infantile haemangioma

Information for parents and carers



What is a haemangioma?

An infantile haemangioma is a collection of small blood vessels. 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 shrink over time.

What is topical timolol?

Timolol is a type of drug called a beta-blocker. It comes as a gel called timolol maleate 0.5%, that is spread onto the haemangioma. It helps to stop haemangiomas from growing and can speed up the normal shrinking process.

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 become infected and painful. If this happens, treatment with timolol can improve your child's symptoms.

Is it safe?

Lots of people around the country are now using this treatment. As the gel is only applied to the skin, it has fewer side effects than other existing treatments that are taken by mouth. Timolol was originally produced as a treatment for eye disease, but has been proven safe to use on the skin to treat haemangiomas.

How do I use timolol gel?

It is recommended to put 2-3 drops of the topical timolol maleate 0.5% gel on your finger and then spread it over the entire surface of the haemangioma. This needs to be done two times per day (a total of 4-6 drops per day), usually in the morning or evening, and after washing.

Your child can still go swimming and spend time outside in the sunlight when using the gel.

How long will my child need to use timolol?

You will need to continue with the timolol gel treatment for several months. We will monitor your child on a regular basis to check how the treatment is going.

What are the side effects?

It is not likely that your child will develop any side effects from using timolol. However, the most common local side effects to the area being treated include:

- burning sensation
- stinging
- skin irritation.

If your child's haemangioma continues to grow, or the surface becomes broken and sore please contact your GP or consultant. We may need recommend a different treatment, such as propranolol.

If your child develops any of the following symptoms you should seek further advice from your GP or consultant immediately:

- dizziness
- wheeze and cough.

Questions or concerns

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

Paediatric dermatologist's secretary

Tel: **01865 228 224**

(Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm)

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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