

# DIGOXIN

**Other names:** Lanoxin®, Lanoxin PG®



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medicine?

Digoxin belongs to a group of medicines known as cardiac glycosides.

It is used to treat irregular heartbeats called arrhythmias (e.g. atrial fibrillation or atrial flutter) and heart failure.

Digoxin works by controlling the rate at which your heart beats, so that it can beat more efficiently. Digoxin also strengthens the force of your heart beat, which is why it is useful in heart failure.

## When to take this medicine

Take your digoxin regularly at the same time each day. It is best to be taken with food, as it can upset the stomach and cause nausea (sickness).

**Check with your doctor before stopping digoxin - do not stop taking this medication suddenly.**

Your response to digoxin will be monitored by your doctor and may involve blood tests.

## If you miss a dose

Take the dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- irregular or very slow heartbeat
- lack of appetite
- tiredness, weakness or dizziness
- nausea and/or vomiting
- hives or itching
- trouble breathing

- unexpected bruising, bleeding or skin rashes
- blurred vision or coloured vision such as a yellow, green or white halo around objects

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect is of a concern to you.

### **Other medicines**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Careful monitoring of digoxin is required by your doctor or pharmacist when taking other medication, for example:

- Phenytoin (an antiepileptic medicine) can reduce the body's level of digoxin. This combination can also cause a slower heart beat
- St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) can also reduce the body's level of digoxin requiring an adjustment in dose (an increase)
- Cardiac medication (e.g. amiodarone, diltiazem, verapamil) can increase the body's level of digoxin requiring a reduced dose
- Itraconazole (antifungal) can also increase digoxin's body level which could result in a slower heart rate

**Do not** take indigestion remedies (e.g. Mylanta) or dietary fibre supplements at the same time of day as digoxin as this can decrease the absorption of digoxin. Take them at least one hour before or two hours after a dose of digoxin.

### **Storage**

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist**