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2. Propofol

Propofol

Generic name: propofol [*PROE-poe-fol*]

Brand names: Diprivan, Propoven

Drug class: General anesthetics

Medically reviewed by [Kaci Durbin, MD](#). Last updated on Feb 3, 2025.

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What is propofol?

Propofol slows the activity of your brain and nervous system.

Propofol is used to put you to sleep and keep you asleep during general anesthesia for surgery or other medical procedures. It is used in adults as well as children 2 months and older.

Propofol is also used to sedate a patient who is under critical care and needs a mechanical ventilator (breathing machine).

Warnings

Before you receive propofol, tell your doctor about all your medical conditions and allergies. Also make sure your doctor knows if you are pregnant or breast-feeding. In some cases, you may not be able to use propofol.

The FDA cautions recommends against using propofol if you are allergic to eggs, egg products, soybeans, or soy products.

Before receiving this medicine

You should not receive propofol if you are allergic to it. Tell your doctor if you have allergies to eggs, egg products, soybeans, or soy products.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- epilepsy or other seizure disorder; or
- high cholesterol or triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood); or
- liver or kidney disease.

Anesthesia medicine may affect brain development in a child under 3, or an unborn baby whose mother receives this medicine during late pregnancy. These effects may be more likely when the anesthesia is used for 3 hours or longer, or

used for repeated procedures. Effects on brain development could cause learning or behavior problems later in life.

Negative brain effects from anesthesia have been seen in animal studies. However, studies in human children receiving single short uses of anesthesia have not shown a likely effect on behavior or learning. More research is needed.

In some cases, your doctor may decide to postpone a surgery or procedure based on these risks. Treatment may not be delayed in the case of life-threatening conditions, medical emergencies, or surgery needed to correct certain birth defects.

Ask your doctor for information about all medicines that will be used during your surgery or procedure. Also ask how long the procedure will last.

Propofol can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. However, as propofol acts and leaves the body quickly, most women can resume breastfeeding as soon as they are recovered from anesthesia and fully awake.

 [Propofol pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How is propofol given?

Propofol is injected into a vein through an IV. A healthcare provider will give you this injection.

You will relax and fall asleep very quickly after propofol is injected.

Your breathing, blood pressure, oxygen levels, kidney function, and other vital signs will be watched closely while you are under the effects of propofol.

 [Detailed Propofol dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Since propofol is given by a healthcare professional in a medical setting, you are not likely to miss a dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Since this medication is given by a healthcare professional in a medical setting, an overdose is unlikely to occur.

What should I avoid after receiving propofol?

Propofol causes severe drowsiness and dizziness, which may last for several hours. You will need someone to drive you home after your surgery or procedure. Do not drive yourself or do anything that requires you to be awake and alert for at least 24 hours after you have been treated with propofol.

Propofol side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have any **signs of an allergic reaction to propofol**: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Long-term use of propofol can lead to a syndrome called Propofol Infusion Syndrome, which may result in death.

Tell your caregiver right away if you have:

- a light-headed feeling (like you might pass out) even after feeling awake;
- weak or shallow breathing; or
- severe pain or discomfort where the injection is given.

Common propofol side effects may include:

- mild itching or rash;
- fast or slow heart rate; or
- slight burning or stinging around the IV needle.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Propofol side effects](#) (more detail)

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What other drugs will affect propofol?

Taking other medicines that make you sleepy or slow your breathing can worsen these effects. After you have been treated with propofol, ask your doctor before taking a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, prescription cough medicine, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures (especially valproic acid).

Other drugs may interact with this medicine, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal

products. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use now and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Propofol drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does propofol interact with my other drugs?

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Other brands

[Diprivan](#), [Propoven](#)

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

Pregnancy & Lactation


 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History

 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

7.5 / 10

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