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2. Digoxin

Digoxin

Generic name: digoxin (oral/injection) [*di-JOX-in*]

Brand names: [Digitek](#), [Digox](#), [Lanoxin](#), [Lanoxicaps](#), Cardoxin

Drug classes: [Group V antiarrhythmics](#), [Inotropic agents](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Aug 15, 2023.

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What is digoxin?

[Digoxin](#) is derived from the leaves of a digitalis plant. Digoxin helps make the heart beat stronger and with a more regular rhythm.

Digoxin is used to treat [heart failure](#).

Digoxin is also used to treat [atrial fibrillation](#), a heart rhythm disorder of the atria (the upper chambers of the heart that allow blood to flow into the heart).

Warnings

You should not use digoxin if you have ventricular fibrillation (a heart rhythm disorder of the ventricles, or lower chambers of the heart that allow blood to flow out of the heart).

Before taking this medicine

You should not use digoxin if you are allergic to it, or if you have ventricular fibrillation (a heart rhythm disorder of the ventricles, or lower chambers of the heart that allow blood to flow out of the heart).

To make sure digoxin is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- a serious heart condition such as "sick sinus syndrome" or "AV block" (unless you have a pacemaker);
- a [heart attack](#);
- slow heartbeats that have caused you to faint;
- [Wolff-Parkinson-White Syndrome](#) (sudden fast heartbeats);
- kidney disease;
- an electrolyte imbalance (such as low levels of calcium, potassium, or magnesium in your blood);

- a thyroid disorder; or
- if you have recently been sick with [vomiting](#) or [diarrhea](#).

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant. It is not known whether digoxin will harm an unborn baby. However, having heart failure or atrial fibrillation during pregnancy may cause complications such as premature birth or low birth weight, or risk of death in both mother and baby. The benefit of treating heart problems with digoxin may outweigh any risks to the baby.

It may not be safe to breast-feed while using digoxin. Ask your doctor about any risk.

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

How should I use digoxin?

Take digoxin exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets.

Try to take oral digoxin at the same time every day.

Measure liquid medicine carefully. Use the dosing syringe provided, or use a medicine dose-measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Take digoxin regularly even if you feel fine or have no symptoms. Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely.

Digoxin injection is given as a shot into a muscle, or as an infusion into a vein. A healthcare provider will give you this injection if you are unable to take the medicine by mouth.

Your blood pressure and heart rate will need to be checked daily.

You may need frequent blood tests. Your kidney function may also need to be checked.

You should not stop taking this medicine suddenly. Stopping suddenly may make your condition worse.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

 [Digoxin patient tips](#) (more detail)

Dosing information

Usual Adult Dose of Digoxin for Congestive Heart Failure:

Rapid Digitalization with a Loading Dose:

Peak digoxin body stores of 8 to 12 mcg/kg generally provide a therapeutic effect with minimum risk of toxicity in most patients with heart failure and normal sinus rhythm.

The loading dose should be administered in several fractions, with approximately half the total given as the first dose. Additional fractions of the total dose may be given at 6 to 8 hour intervals. Careful assessment of the patient's clinical response should be considered before each additional dose. If the patient's response necessitates a change from the calculated loading dose of digoxin, then calculation of the maintenance dose should be based upon the amount actually given.

Tablets:

Initial: 500 to 750 mcg usually produces a detectable effect in 0.5 to 2 hours with a maximal effect in 2 to 6 hours. Additional doses of 125 to 375 mcg may be given at 6 to 8 hour intervals until clinical evidence of an adequate effect is noted. The usual amount of tablets that a 70 kg patient requires to achieve 8 to 12 mcg/kg peak body stores is 750 to 1250 mcg.

Capsules:

Initial: 400 to 600 mcg of digoxin capsules generally produces a detectable effect in 0.5 to 2 hours with a maximal effect in 2 to 6 hours. Additional doses of 100 to 300 mcg may be given cautiously at 6 to 8 hour intervals until clinical evidence of an adequate effect is noted. The usual amount of capsules that a 70 kg patient requires to achieve 8 to 12 mcg/kg peak body stores is 600 to 1000 mcg.

Injection:

Initial: 400 to 600 mcg of digoxin intravenously usually produces a detectable effect in 5 to 30 minutes with a maximal effect in 1 to 4 hours. Additional doses of 100 to 300 mcg may be given cautiously at 6 to 8 hour intervals until clinical evidence of an adequate effect is noted. The usual amount of digoxin injection that a 70 kg patient requires to achieve 8 to 12 mcg/kg peak body stores is 600 to 1000 mcg. The injectable route is frequently used to achieve rapid digitalization, with conversion to digoxin tablets or digoxin capsules for maintenance therapy.

Maintenance Dose:

The doses of digoxin tablets used in controlled trials in patients with heart failure have ranged from 125 to 500 mcg once daily. In these studies, the dose has been generally titrated according to the patient's age, lean body weight, and renal function. Therapy is generally initiated at a dose of 250 mcg once daily in patients under age 70 with good renal function.

Usual Adult Dose for Atrial Fibrillation:

Peak digoxin body stores larger than the 8 to 12 mcg/kg required for most patients with heart failure and normal sinus rhythm have been used for control of ventricular rate in patients with atrial fibrillation. Doses used for the treatment of chronic atrial fibrillation should be titrated to the minimum dose that achieves the desired ventricular rate control without causing undesirable side effects.

Usual Pediatric Dose for Atrial Fibrillation:

Do not give full total digitalizing dose at once. Administer loading doses in several portions, give roughly half the total as the first dose. Give additional fractions of the total dose at 6 to 8 hour intervals (oral) or 4 to 8 hour intervals (parenteral). Divided daily dosing is recommended for infants and young children under 10 years of age.

Parenteral administration should be used only when the need for rapid digitalization is urgent or when the drug cannot be taken orally. Intravenous administration is preferred over intramuscular injection as it can lead to severe pain at the injection site. If it is necessary to administer the drug by the intramuscular route, it should be injected deep into the muscle followed by massage. No more than 500 mcg should be injected into a single site.

Calculated doses should be based on lean body weight.

Premature:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 20 to 30 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 15 to 25 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: oral 5 to 7.5 mcg/kg; intravenous 4 to 6 mcg/kg

Full Term:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 25 to 35 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 20 to 30 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: oral 6 to 10 mcg/kg; intravenous 5 to 8 mcg/kg

1-24 months:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 35 to 60 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 30 to 50 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: 10 to 15 mcg/kg oral; intravenous 7.5 to 12 mcg/kg

3 to 5 years:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 30 to 40 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 25 to 35 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: oral 7.5 to 10 mcg/kg; intravenous 6 to 9 mcg/kg

6 to 10 years:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 20 to 35 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 15 to 30 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: oral 5 to 10 mcg/kg; intravenous 4 to 8 mcg/kg

11 years and older:

Digitalizing (Loading) dose: Oral elixir: 10 to 15 mcg/kg; Intravenous: 8 to 12 mcg/kg
Maintenance dose: oral 2.5 to 5 mcg/kg; intravenous 2 to 3 mcg/kg

 [Detailed Digoxin dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if your next dose is due in less than 12 hours. Do not take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of digoxin can be fatal.**

Overdose symptoms may include [nausea](#), vomiting, loss of appetite, and feeling tired.

What should I avoid while using digoxin?

Avoid becoming overheated or dehydrated during exercise, in hot weather, or by not drinking enough fluids. Digoxin overdose can occur more easily if you are dehydrated.

Digoxin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to digoxin**: [hives](#); difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain;
- fast, slow, or uneven heart rate;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;

- bloody or black, tarry stools;
- confusion, weakness, hallucinations, unusual thoughts or behavior;
- breast swelling or tenderness;
- blurred vision, yellowed vision; or
- (in babies or children) stomach pain, [weight loss](#), growth delay, behavior changes.

Serious side effects may be more likely in older adults and those who are ill or debilitated.

Common digoxin side effects may include:

- nausea, diarrhea;
- feeling weak or dizzy;
- [headache](#), weakness, [anxiety](#), [depression](#); or
- rash.

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.

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

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What other drugs will affect digoxin?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Many drugs can interact with digoxin. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed here. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

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

Does digoxin interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

digoxin

+

Enter a drug name

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Patient resources

Other brands

[Lanoxin](#), [Digitek](#), [Digox](#), [Lanoxicaps](#)

Professional resources

- [Digoxin monograph](#)
- [Digoxin Injection \(FDA\)](#)
- [Digoxin Oral Solution \(FDA\)](#)
- [Digoxin Tablets \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

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Related treatment guides

- [Atrial Fibrillation](#)
- [Heart Failure](#)

Further information

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

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

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

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

5.8 / 10

[17 Reviews](#)

Images

Digoxin 250 mcg (0.25 mg) (JSP 545)



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