

# Penicillin V for tonsillitis or pharyngitis

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about your child taking penicillin V to treat their tonsillitis or pharyngitis.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is penicillin V?

Penicillin V is an antibiotic which is also known as phenoxymethylpenicillin. Your child should take the medicine in the way that it has been prescribed so that it kills the harmful bacteria and gets rid of their infection.

Your child should start to get better after taking the medicine for two days. It is important that they **take the whole course** of the medicine that has been prescribed. **Do not stop early.**



**If your child has ever had a reaction to any antibiotic, check with your doctor that they can have penicillin V before giving it.**

Remember, antibiotics only kill bacteria; they can't kill a virus.

## How do I give the medicine?

Penicillin V is usually given **four** times a day **for 10 days**. There should be about three hours between each dose.

The medicine works best on an empty stomach, so try to give it to your child half an hour or an hour before they eat: before breakfast, before lunch, before tea and at bedtime.

If your child's stomach is upset, you can give them the medicine with a small amount of food.

The medication label will state the amount of penicillin V (the dose) that is right for *your* child.

If your child is having **tablets**, these should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablets.

If your child is having **liquid medicine**: shake the medicine well and measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or a medicine spoon. Once you have measured the right amount you can dilute it with a small amount of water or milk if your child prefers this.

Each bottle of liquid medicine is made up from a powder and expires after seven days. You will then need to follow these instructions to make up a new bottle:

1. boil enough tap water and let it cool to room temperature
2. gently shake the bottle of powdered medicine to loosen it
3. check on the bottle to see how much water to add and use the measuring syringe provided to draw up the right amount of water and squeeze it into the bottle
4. shake the bottle until all the powder has mixed with the water
5. check the bottom of the bottle to make sure no powder is left
6. keep the bottle of medicine you have made up in the fridge.

## What should I do if I forget to give my child their medicine?



Always follow your doctor's instructions about how much medicine to give, and give your child the whole dose each time.



If you miss a dose by more than **2 hours**, never give a double dose of penicillin V. Miss this dose and continue with the next dose as planned. If you think you may have given your child too much penicillin V, contact your doctor or local NHS service (111 in England and Scotland; 0845 4647 in Wales). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

If your child is sick **less than** 30 minutes (half an hour) after having a dose of penicillin V, give them the same dose again.

If your child is sick **more than** 30 minutes after having a dose of penicillin V, **do not** give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.



If your child is sick again, seek advice from your GP, pharmacist or hospital. They will decide what to do based on your child's condition and the specific medicine involved.

## Are there any side effects?

Side-effects are rare with penicillin V and do not usually last long. They will get better after a day or two as your child's body gets used to the medicine, and should go away when the treatment is finished.

Some children get diarrhoea, stomach pains and may feel or be sick (vomit) when they first start taking penicillin V. Encourage them to drink water to replace the fluid they have lost. Contact your doctor if your child has diarrhoea that goes on for more than 4 days or if it is severe and watery, or contains blood. **Do not** give your child any medicine to stop the diarrhoea unless your doctor has told you to, as this can make things worse.

You may see white patches inside your child's mouth and throat, and girls may get itching or soreness around the vagina. This is a side effect which is caused by a fungal infection called thrush. If you think your child may have this, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.



### Side-effects which are urgent to deal with

If your child gets a skin rash or itching, is short of breath or wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, they may be allergic to penicillin V. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.

## Is there anything else I need to know?

Your child **must complete the course** of antibiotics (they must take the medicine for the number of days the doctor has said, or until all the medicine has been taken). If you stop too soon bacteria will start to multiply again and may cause another infection. There is also a risk that these new bacteria will be resistant to the first antibiotic which means it might not work next time, and your child might need a different antibiotic.

Only give this medicine to your child for their current infection. **Never save** medicine for future illnesses. Give old or unused antibiotics back to your pharmacist for them to dispose of safely.

If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor for advice.

**Keep liquid medicine in the fridge**, but make sure it does not freeze. Make sure children can't see or reach the medicine, and keep it in the container it came in.

## Useful sources of information

The website medicines for children has more information:

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/penicillin-v-bacterial-infections](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/penicillin-v-bacterial-infections)

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child taking penicillin V for tonsillitis or pharyngitis, please contact St George's medicines information patient helpline on 020 8725 1033 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm). Out of hours, please leave a message and the Medicines Information Team will return your call.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

Adapted from the Medicines for Children Patient Information Leaflet

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/penicillin-v-bacterial-infections](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/penicillin-v-bacterial-infections)

