

# Postnatal Medications

## Medication Information Leaflet

This leaflet describes some of the medications that may be prescribed by your doctor after your delivery.

Paracetamol	
<b>What is this for</b>	This is a painkiller which can help reduce mild pain or fever.
<b>How to take</b>	Take when necessary. It may be taken with or without food.
<b>Side effects</b>	Generally well tolerated without any significant side effects.
<b>Other considerations</b>	Do not take with any other paracetamol-containing products e.g. Panadol, Anarex

Mefenamic Acid / Naproxen / Ibuprofen (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs or NSAIDs)	
<b>What is this for</b>	These are painkillers which can help to reduce moderate to severe pain, or when your pain is not relieved by paracetamol.
<b>How to take</b>	Take when necessary or as directed by your doctor. Take after food.
<b>Side effects</b>	Stomach discomfort or gastric irritation is a common side effect. Taking this medication after food reduces this side effect. You may also be given some medications such as antacids that will help protect the stomach from gastric irritation.
<b>Other considerations</b>	There are many types of NSAIDs available; however not all NSAIDs are safe for breast-feeding. If you are taking any NSAIDs other than the ones stated in this leaflet, please check with your healthcare professional if it is safe to be used while you are breast-feeding.

Stomach Protectants e.g. antacids / famotidine	
<b>What is this for</b>	Antacids or famotidine may be prescribed by your doctor as a stomach protectant when you are given NSAIDs, to help with stomach discomfort.
<b>How to take</b>	As antacids may come in tablet or liquid form, always follow the instructions provided. Most antacids are usually chewable tablets and you should chew them before taking the NSAIDs.  Famotidine is usually given once or twice daily, and can be taken together with NSAIDs.
<b>Side effects</b>	Generally well tolerated without any significant side effects.
<b>Other considerations</b>	You may need to space antacids at least 2 hours apart from some medications. Please check with your healthcare professional if you are taking some other medications.

Multivitamins and Iron supplements	
<b>What is this for</b>	Iron is needed to make red blood cells. Multivitamins containing iron or plain iron supplements may be given after a delivery, to help replenish the blood loss during delivery.
<b>How to take</b>	Follow the instructions on the medication label.
<b>Side effects</b>	Generally well tolerated. Some of the common side effects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark-coloured stools. This is harmless.</li> <li>• Constipation. You can drink more water and take plenty of fruits and vegetables to prevent it.</li> </ul>

<b>Other considerations</b>	For supplements containing iron, space at least 2 hours apart from coffee, tea, milk, dairy products, and calcium-containing supplements for better iron absorption. (Exception: Iron polymaltose e.g. Maltofer / Floron).
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<b>Laxatives e.g. liquid paraffin / lactulose</b>	
<b>What is this for</b>	You may be prescribed laxatives, either a lubricant (e.g. liquid paraffin) or a stool softener (e.g. lactulose) for short-term treatment of constipation.
<b>How to take</b>	It may be taken with or without food.
<b>Side effects</b>	Generally well tolerated. May cause diarrhea, upset stomach.
<b>Other considerations</b>	If you are prescribed liquid paraffin: Do not lie down for at least 30 minutes after taking this medicine to avoid aspiration pneumonia (medicine leaking back into the lungs). Avoid taking Liquid Paraffin with multivitamins as it may interfere with the absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins in multivitamins. Space at least 1 hour apart between these two medications.

<b>Galactogogues e.g. domperidone / fenugreek</b>	
<b>What is this for</b>	You may be prescribed galactogogues, which are medications to stimulate breast milk production
<b>How to take</b>	If you are prescribed domperidone, take half to one hour before food. If you are prescribed fenugreek, it may be taken with or without food.
<b>Side effects</b>	Generally well tolerated.

## What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

You should take multivitamins and iron supplements regularly. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Then take your next dose at the usual time. Do not take two doses to make up for the missed dose.

Most of the other post-natal medications are only to be taken if you have symptoms, if you have no symptoms, you do not need to take the medication.

## What else can I do?

- Drink at least 8-10 cups of fluids daily. This replaces fluids lost through breastfeeding and also helps to relieve constipation. Be sure to avoid sugar sweetened drinks!
- Have a supply of staple food items (e.g. rice/noodles/pasta, eggs, frozen vegetables) so that quick easy meals can be made
- Cook extras at dinner and freeze in single portions to use at busy times.
- Have healthy snacks readily available for convenience when hungry (e.g. tubs of yogurt, dried fruit and nuts, wholemeal crackers, fruit).
- You should try to limit alcohol consumption while you are breast-feeding. Generally, moderate alcohol intake by the breast-feeding mother (up to 1 standard drink a day) is not known to be harmful. You should also:
  - Wait for at least 3 hours after alcohol consumption before the next breastfeed.

- Avoid alcohol completely in the 1st week after delivery as (i) baby's liver is not completely mature, and (ii) to allow establishment of breast milk supply so that breast milk can be pumped and stored for later use in case baby needs an earlier feed.
- Limit to 2 cups of coffee or tea per day as caffeine has been shown to pass to babies through breast milk.

## **What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?**

Symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Skin rashes

If you experience any of these symptoms, stop taking the supplement and seek immediate medical attention.

## **How should I store these medications?**

Follow the instructions on the medication label. Keep this medication away from children.

## How should I throw away these medications safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing it into the rubbish chute or bin.

### Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.*

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