
Department of Cardiology/Pharmacy

Loop Diuretics ('Water Tablets')

Examples: Furosemide
Bumetanide

Action

Loop diuretics are often called 'water tablets'. If your heart or kidneys are not working properly water might build up in your body. You might get swollen ankles or feel short of breath. Water tablets help to get rid of the extra water from your body. They help your heart and kidneys to work better.

Taking your 'water tablets'

Water tablets are usually taken once or twice a day. Always follow the instructions on the label of your medicine. If you take one dose each day, you should take it in the morning. If you take two doses each day, you should take the first dose in the morning and the second dose in the afternoon. You will pass water for about four hours after taking the dose.

Problems to watch for

- Water tablets can make you lose potassium and other salts from your body. Make sure you eat foods containing potassium like tomatoes or bananas.
- Water tablets can make you lose too much water from your body. If this happens you will feel thirsty and your mouth will feel dry. Tell your doctor if this happens often. Do not stop taking your water tablets unless your doctor tells you to.
- Water tablets can make your blood pressure a bit too low. You might feel dizzy when you first stand up. Take care to stand up slowly and get your balance before setting off walking.
- Water tablets can have side effects. Tell your doctor if you get problems with:
 - Ringing in your ears.
 - Weak muscles.
 - Joint pains or red and swollen joints.
 - Muscle cramps.
 - A skin rash.
- Tell your doctor if you notice any strange effects from taking your water tablets.
- Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding must talk to their doctor before taking furosemide. The doctor will want to discuss the risks and benefits with you.



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

Authors	Pharmacy Department
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
Contact number	01223 245151
Publish/Review date	March 2011/March 2014 (no changes made)
File name	Loop_diuretics .doc
Version number/Ref	3/PIN1606