

## Timolol tablets – a beta-blocker

Timolol is used to treat a number of different conditions. If you are unsure why you are taking it, speak with your doctor.

Continue to take the tablets regularly unless your doctor tells you to stop.

The most common side-effects are feeling tired, cold fingers or toes, disturbed sleep, and a slow heartbeat.

### About timolol tablets

Type of medicine	A beta-adrenoceptor blocking medicine (often referred to as a beta-blocker)
Used for	Hypertension; arrhythmias; angina; to protect the heart; to prevent migraines
Available as	Tablets

Timolol belongs to the group of medicines known as [beta-blockers](#). It is a medicine which is used to treat several different medical conditions. It works on the heart and blood vessels.

Timolol slows down the activity of your heart by stopping messages sent by some nerves to your heart. It does this by blocking tiny areas (called beta-adrenergic receptors) where the messages are received by your heart. As a result, your heart beats more slowly and with less force. This allows the pressure of blood within your blood vessels to be reduced if you have [high blood pressure \(hypertension\)](#), and helps to prevent [abnormally fast heart rhythms \(arrhythmias\)](#). Because your heart is using less energy, this helps to reduce chest pain if you have [angina](#). Timolol can also help to protect the heart following a [heart attack](#).

Timolol is also prescribed to help [prevent migraines](#). It can be helpful for people who find other treatments for reducing the number of migraine attacks unsuitable.

Timolol is also available in combination with medicines known as [diuretics](#) (often referred to as 'water tablets'). These combination tablets are only used for the treatment of high blood pressure.

Eye drops which contain timolol are available for the treatment of glaucoma. There is a separate medicine leaflet available called [Timolol eye drops for glaucoma](#) which gives more information about this.

## Before taking timolol tablets

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking timolol it is important that your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have asthma or any other breathing disorder.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or with the way your kidneys work.
- If you have low blood pressure or poor circulation.
- If you have high blood sugar levels (diabetes mellitus).
- If you have a skin problem called psoriasis.
- If you have a condition causing muscle weakness, called myasthenia gravis.
- If you have been told you have a slow heartbeat or heart block (a slow and irregular heartbeat).
- If you have been told you have chest pain called Prinzmetal's angina (caused by spasms of your heart's blood vessels).
- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine, or if you have ever had any other serious allergic reaction.

## How to take timolol tablets

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about timolol and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Take timolol exactly as your doctor tells you to. It is usual to take one or two doses each day. Your doctor may prescribe you a small dose initially (5-10 mg). As this may mean taking half a tablet, the tablets are scored so that they can be divided into two. If necessary, your doctor will increase your dose slowly over the next few weeks. Increasing your dose slowly allows your doctor to make sure that you have the dose that helps your condition but prevents unwanted side-effects.
- You can take the tablets before or after your meals, but try to take your doses at the same time of day each day, as this will help you to remember to take timolol regularly.
- If you do forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless your next dose is due. If your next dose is due then take the tablet which is due but leave out the forgotten one. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- Treatment with timolol can often be long-term. Continue to take the tablets unless your doctor tells you to stop. Stopping treatment suddenly can cause problems in some people, so your doctor may want you to reduce your dose gradually if this becomes necessary.
- If you are due to have an operation or dental treatment, it is important to tell the person carrying out the treatment that you are taking a beta-blocker. This is because some anaesthetics may increase the risk of unwanted effects.

- If you drink alcohol, ask your doctor for advice about taking timolol and alcohol. Alcohol will add to the blood pressure-lowering effect of timolol and so may not be recommended for you.
- If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable for you to take. Some medicines (including some cough, cold and flu remedies) may not be.
- Your doctor may give you dietary and lifestyle advice about eating a healthy diet, not smoking, and taking regular exercise. If so, it is important that you follow the advice you are given.
- If you have diabetes, timolol can block the symptoms of low blood sugar. Your doctor will advise you about this.

## **Can timolol tablets cause problems?**

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with timolol. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Timolol side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, let your doctor know
Feeling sick (nausea), stomach upset	Stick to simple foods - avoid rich or spicy meals
Feeling dizzy, tired or light-headed (especially when getting up from a sitting or lying down position)	Getting up more slowly may help. If you begin to feel faint, sit down for a few minutes until the feeling passes. Do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you feel better
Feeling breathless, cold hands or feet, tingling feelings, disturbed sleep, mood changes, impotence, eyesight problems, slow heartbeat	Speak with your doctor if any of these become troublesome

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

## How to store timolol

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

# Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital at once. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Timolol maleate 10 mg tablets](#); Mylan, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2019.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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