

Drug Information Table

Cardiac Glycosides – digoxin (Lanoxin)

Therapeutic Use	Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance therapy for heart failure • Treats some cardiac dysrhythmias <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Atrial fibrillation ◦ Atrial flutter ◦ Paroxysmal atrial tachycardia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available as oral tablets, capsules, and elixir, as well as for IV use • Give oral form with or without food • Tablets may be crushed and mixed with food if necessary • IV form may be administered directly over at least 5 min; monitor site carefully for infiltration, which can cause tissue damage 	
Side/Adverse Effects	Interventions	Patient Instructions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GI symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nausea, vomiting, anorexia ◦ Can be adverse effects or signs of early toxicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that vomiting can cause hypokalemia, which increases risk for digoxin toxicity • Monitor for and report GI symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report nausea, loss of appetite, or vomiting to provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNS symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Headache, visual disturbances, such as yellow vision and blurred vision ◦ Can be adverse effects or signs of early toxicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor for and report CNS effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report headache, visual disturbances to provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiac dysrhythmias, especially likely with digoxin toxicity • Any dysrhythmia may occur, with AV block being most common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take apical pulse for 1 full minute before administering digoxin; withhold drug if pulse falls below prescribed parameters (such as 60/min in adults) • Monitor digoxin levels frequently • Monitor serum potassium levels; administer potassium for low or borderline low values • Monitor cardiac rhythm and treat dysrhythmias per protocol • For severe digoxin toxicity, digoxin immune FAB (Digibind) is administered IV as an antidote to neutralize digoxin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report heart palpitations to provider • Learn to monitor pulse rate and report decrease or increase beyond prescribed parameters • To decrease risk of toxicity or low serum levels, take digoxin at the same time each day; do not skip or double a dose • Report signs of hypokalemia, such as muscle weakness
Contraindications	Precautions	Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ventricular fibrillation or tachycardia unless caused by heart failure • Digoxin toxicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypokalemia • Impaired kidney function • Infants, children and older adults • Acute MI and severe heart failure • Dysrhythmias such as incomplete heart block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erythromycin and some other antibiotics increase digoxin levels • Other antidysrhythmics (verapamil, quinidine, amiodarone, flecainide) increase digoxin levels; decrease digoxin dosage for concurrent administration • Diuretics increase risk for digoxin toxicity by decreasing potassium levels • Herbal ginseng increases risk of digoxin toxicity; St. John's wort decreases digoxin levels • Note that the above interactions do not comprise a complete list. It's important to check for interactions when other drugs are given along with digoxin