



Medications at Home: Ranitidine (Zantac)

The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) team celebrates with you as your baby goes home! After graduation from the NICU, your baby will need medication to stay well.

Why does my baby need this medication?

- Ranitidine is used to prevent and treat stress ulcers.
- This medication prevents and treats gastrointestinal bleeding caused by stomach acid.
- Ranitidine also treats gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), sometimes called *acid reflux*, by decreasing the amount of stomach acid. In GERD, stomach acid flows upward into the throat and may cause pain and harm to the throat.

How, how much, and when is this medication given to my baby?

- Ranitidine is given by mouth.
- The amount of medicine to give has been carefully calculated based on your baby's weight and needed response from the medicine. Do not change the dosage without talking to your baby's provider.
- Dose Instructions: _____

What are possible side effects?

- Irritability (due to headache)
- Constipation
- Diarrhea (watery stool)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Enlarged stomach
- Irregular heartbeat

What if my baby misses a dose or spits up the medication?

- Give the missed dose as soon as you remember it. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and stick to the regular medication schedule.
- Never give a double dose.
- Call your baby's provider if your baby misses two or more doses or spits up the medication.

Important Medication Safety Tips

- Only give your baby medicines prescribed by your baby's healthcare provider. Do not share prescription medicines with other children or adults.
- Check with your baby's provider before giving your baby any over-the-counter medicines.
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children, closed tightly in the bottles or containers they came in, and with the labels of directions given by the pharmacy.
- Give ranitidine exactly as directed by your baby's healthcare provider.
 - Never stop the ranitidine or give too much or too little without first talking with your baby's healthcare provider. Too little may not be enough to help, and too much may cause harm. In the case of an overdose, immediately call the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222. If you cannot wake your baby or he or she has stopped breathing, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and call your local emergency medical services or 911 right away.
 - Store ranitidine at room temperature and away from excess heat and damp areas like the bathroom.

Always use the five *rights* when giving medication to your baby:

- Right baby (if other children are in the home)
- Right medication



- Right amount (always measure the dose with the syringe or dropper provided by the pharmacy, not a common household teaspoon)
- Right time
- Right way (exactly as prescribed and directed by your baby's provider).

The above information is to help you better understand your baby's care. Always follow the instructions given by your baby's health-care provider and pharmacist. It's always OK to ask questions if you have concerns about your baby.

Online Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

HealthFinder.gov
www.healthfinder.gov

Institute for Safe Medication Practices
www.ismp.org/consumers

Kids Health
www.kidshealth.org

Medline Plus: Drug Information
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov