



## Medications at Home: Caffeine Citrate

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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?

- Caffeine citrate is used to prevent and treat apnea (long pauses between breaths or irregular breathing during sleep).
- This medication stimulates the brain to “remind” your baby to breathe.

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

- Caffeine citrate 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. You may need a small syringe to accurately measure the dose. Do not change the dosage without talking to your baby’s provider.
- The caffeine citrate oral solution does not contain any preservatives. Do not open the vial until it is time for your baby to receive the dose of medicine. Use each vial only once. After you remove your baby’s dose, throw away the vial and all medicine left in the opened vial.
- Dose Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

### What are possible side effects?

- Restlessness (fussiness)
- Vomiting
- Fast heartbeat
- Increased urination, diaper wetting

### 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 healthcare 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 provider. Do not share prescription medications 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 caffeine citrate exactly as directed by your baby’s provider.
  - Never stop caffeine citrate or give more or less than prescribed without first talking with your baby’s 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 caffeine citrate at room temperature and away from light, heat, and damp areas like the bathroom.
  - Do not give your baby food or drinks that contain caffeine (e.g., soda, energy drinks, coffee, tea, chocolate).
  - Your baby may need blood tests while on this medication.
- Contact your provider if
  - your baby begins to have more monitor alarms or blood in his or her stools



- your baby’s heart rate is higher than 180 beats per minute, talk to your baby’s provider before giving caffeine citrate
- your baby has a bloated abdomen or vomiting.
- 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 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](http://www.aap.org)

HealthFinder.gov  
[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

Institute for Safe Medication Practices  
[www.consumermedsafety.org](http://www.consumermedsafety.org)

Kids Health  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

Medline Plus: Drug Information  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)