

TIMOLOL

Brand names Betim, Nyogel, Timoptol, Timoptol LA

Used in the following combined preparations Combigan, Cosopt, DuoTrav, Ganfort, Prestim, Xalacom

GENERAL INFORMATION

Timolol is a non-cardioselective beta blocker (p.55) used to treat angina. It may be given after a heart attack to prevent further damage to the heart. Timolol is also used to treat hypertension (high blood pressure), but is not usually used to initiate treatment. It is also commonly given as eye drops to people with certain types of glaucoma and is occasionally

given to prevent migraine. Timolol can occasionally cause breathing difficulties, especially in people with respiratory diseases; this is more likely with the tablets, but it can also occur in people using the eye drops. Timolol may also mask the body's response to low blood sugar and, for that reason, is prescribed with caution to diabetics on insulin.

QUICK REFERENCE

Drug group Beta blocker (p.55) and drug for glaucoma (p.128)

Overdose danger rating High

Dependence rating Low

Prescription needed Yes

Available as generic Yes

INFORMATION FOR USERS

Your drug prescription is tailored for you. Do not alter dosage without checking with your doctor.

How taken/used



Tablets, eye drops.

Frequency and timing of doses

1–3 x daily.

Adult dosage range

By mouth 10–60mg daily (hypertension); 10–60mg daily (angina/hypertension); 10–20mg daily (after a heart attack); 10–20mg daily (migraine prevention).

Onset of effect

Within 30 minutes (by mouth); 15–20 minutes (eye drops).

Duration of action

Up to 24 hours.

Diet advice

None.

Storage

Keep in original container at room temperature out of the reach of children.

Missed dose

Take as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 3 hours, take a single dose now and skip the next.

Stopping the drug

Do not stop taking the drug without consulting your doctor; stopping the drug may lead to worsening of the underlying condition.

OVERDOSE ACTION



Seek immediate medical advice in all cases of overdose if by mouth. Take emergency action if breathing difficulties, palpitations, or loss of consciousness occur.

See Drug poisoning emergency guide (p.510).

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Be sure to tell your doctor if:

- You have heart problems.
- You have kidney or liver problems.
- You have a lung disorder such as asthma, bronchitis, or emphysema.
- You have diabetes.
- You have psoriasis.
- You are taking other medicines.



Pregnancy

Safety in pregnancy not established. Discuss with your doctor.



Breast-feeding

The drug passes into the breast milk, but at normal doses adverse effects on the baby are unlikely. Discuss with your doctor.



Infants and children

Not usually prescribed.



Over 60

Reduced dose may be necessary.



Driving and hazardous work

Avoid such activities until you have learned how timolol affects you because the tablets may cause dizziness or fatigue, and the eye drops may cause blurred vision.



Alcohol

Avoid excessive intake. Alcohol may increase the blood-pressure-lowering effects of timolol.

Surgery and general anaesthetics

Occasionally, timolol eye drops may need to be stopped before you have a general anaesthetic but only do this after discussion with your doctor or dentist.

POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Timolol by mouth can occasionally provoke or worsen heart problems and asthma. Fainting may be a sign that the drug has slowed the

heartbeat or lowered blood pressure excessively. Eye drops cause these problems only rarely; eye irritation is more likely.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Eye irritation (eye drops)	●		●			
Lethargy/fatigue	●			●		
Cold hands and feet	●			●		
Nausea/vomiting		●		●		
Nightmares/vivid dreams		●		●	●	
Rash/dry eyes		●		●	●	
Visual disturbances		●		●	●	
Fainting/palpitations		●		●	●	●
Breathlessness/wheeze		●		●	●	●

INTERACTIONS

Calcium channel blockers may cause low blood pressure, a slow heartbeat, and heart failure if used with timolol.

Cardiac glycosides (e.g. digoxin) may increase the heart-slowing effect of timolol.

Antihypertensive drugs Timolol may enhance the blood-pressure-lowering effect.

Drugs for asthma (e.g. salbutamol, salmeterol, and other beta agonists) The effects of these drugs may be reduced by timolol.

PROLONGED USE

No problems expected.