

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PROPAFENONE

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## What You Need To Know About Propafenone

This handout is a summary of information to help you understand and safely take your medication. You may have unique healthcare needs not addressed in this handout. Be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist about your individual needs.

## Common Brand Name: Rhythmonorm, Rhythmol Or Rhythmol SR

### Why is propafenone prescribed?

Propafenone (proe-pa-FEEN-none) is used to treat patients who have irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias) and to keep your heart beating normally. It acts on the heart muscle to improve the heart's rhythm.

### When do I take propafenone?

Propafenone is usually taken three times a day. You may start taking this medication in the hospital so your healthcare team can closely watch how the medication affects you. It is important to carefully follow the instructions on the prescription label. Ask your pharmacist or doctor to explain anything about the medication that you do not understand. **Take the medication exactly as your doctor tells you to.**

It is important to keep a steady level of propafenone in your body. Take the medication at the same times each day. **NEVER stop taking this medication without first talking with your doctor.** If you suddenly stop taking propafenone, your heartbeat may become irregular.

### How do I take propafenone?



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Propafenone comes in tablet form. The prescription label tells you how many tablets to take each time you take your medication. Take only that amount. You can take propafenone with or without food. If you have any questions about propafenone or refilling your prescription, ask your pharmacist.

### Do I need to follow any special instructions?

- It is important to keep all your appointments with your doctor and the lab. You may need exams, electrocardiograms (ECGs) and blood tests to see how well the medication is working. Your doctor may change your dose, especially if you have side effects.
- **Call your doctor right away if your symptoms get worse (faster heartbeat, more irregular heartbeat, feeling faint).**
- **Make sure you always have enough medication.** Check your supply before holidays, vacations and other times when you may not be able to get a refill.
- Never share your medication with anyone!

### Do I need to eat a special diet?

Foods and salt substitutes that contain potassium can affect the way propafenone works in your body. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice should be avoided, as it may increase serum concentrations of this medication.

**Ask your doctor about changes you may need to make to your diet.**

### Information to share with your doctor

Before you start taking propafenone, tell your doctor:

- For females, if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. For males, if you are trying to have children.
- If you have kidney disease, congestive heart failure, a pacemaker, liver disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, Brugada syndrome, Lupus erythematosus, or Myasthenia gravis.
- About all other medications and supplements you take. This includes over-the-counter/ nonprescription drugs, vitamins and herbal or dietary supplements.
- If you experience too much sweat, fluid loss, throwing up, loose stools (diarrhea), not hungry, or more thirst.
- If you take: digoxin, amiodarone, beta blockers (atenolol [Tenormin], labetalol [Normodyne, Trandate], metoprolol [Lopressor], nadolol [Corgard], propranolol [Inderal], sotalol aripiprazole, anticoagulants (“blood thinners”) such as warfarin (Coumadin) and dabigatran (Pradaxa), cyclosporine, or rifampin, or QTc-Prolonging Agents such as ivabridine, or fluoxetine.

**If you take any of these medications, also tell your pharmacist.**

**If you need to have surgery, including oral surgery, tell your surgeon that you take propafenone.**

### How should I take propafenone?

### How should I store propafenone?

- Keep propafenone in the original bottle, and keep the lid tightly closed.
- Keep the medication at room temperature. Do not keep the bottle near sunlight or moisture. Do not keep the medication in the bathroom.
- Keep this and all medications out of the reach of children.
- Never use expired medications. Many prescription bottles list an expiration date. If you don't know how old your medication is or when it expires, call your pharmacy.

### What if I forget to take a dose of propafenone?

Take the missed dose if you remember it within 4 hours. If 4 or more hours pass after your scheduled dose, skip the missed dose and take your next regular dose. Do not take a double dose of propafenone.

### What are the side effects of propafenone?

Side effects are not common. But, the following side effects are possible:

- Nausea, vomiting, heartburn, gas, loss of appetite, stomach cramps, constipation, diarrhea, anxiety, headache, weakness, changes in sleep habits, muscle aches, sweating, dry mouth, tremors, unusual taste in your mouth. Call your doctor if these symptoms continue or are severe.
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat, fainting, blurred vision, swollen feet or ankles, unusual bleeding or bruising, skin rash, fever, sore throat, chills, trouble breathing. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms.
- Dizziness or drowsiness. If you have these problems, get up slowly after you have been sitting or lying down. Use extra caution when driving or performing activities that require you to be alert until you know how the medication affects you.
- Excessive drowsiness, slow or irregular heartbeat.

**If you have these symptoms, immediately stop taking propafenone and call your doctor.**

**If you are concerned about any other side effects you have that you think could be caused by propafenone, call your doctor.**

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