

Patient information leaflet

Ipratropium bromide for excess saliva

Name of the medicine:

Ipratropium bromide 20 micrograms/puff inhaler

The information given in this leaflet should be read along with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer with your medicine. Click [Search Results - \(emc\) \(medicines.org.uk\)](https://www.medicines.org.uk)

What is it for?

Inhaled ipratropium bromide is usually used to relieve breathlessness in patients with chronic obstructive airways disease or asthma. Ipratropium bromide belongs to a group of medicines called “anti-cholinergics”. These medicines help to reduce excess saliva or prevent the formation of secretions that can cause problems in your respiratory tract. Your respiratory tract is the part of your body involved with breathing. The secretions can build up if you are unable to clear your throat and can cause noisy breathing. This can be distressing.

Inhaling certain medicines can be a useful way of taking them if you are unable to swallow or when it is not possible to give the medicine another way, for example, by injection.

Most medicines available in the UK have a licence. The licence describes the conditions the medicine can be used to treat, and how the medicine can be given. The manufacturer of the medicine has to show that the medicine is safe and made to a high standard before the medicine is licenced.

The use of ipratropium bromide for excess saliva is outside its license. Medicines used in palliative care are quite often used this way. There is experience and research to support the use of ipratropium bromide in this way. The person who prescribed your medicine will have carefully considered the benefits for you.

The information in this leaflet is not included in the information leaflet supplied with the medicine. We are giving you this extra leaflet to tell you about the reason(s) why you are taking this medicine and to highlight other information. You should read both leaflets.

What form(s) of this medicine are there and how is it usually taken?

The medicine is sprayed under the tongue.

Ipratropium bromide 20 micrograms/puff inhaler:

- Spray 1-2 puffs under the tongue every 4 to 6 hours as required up to a maximum of 4 times a day.
- Your health professional will show you how to use the inhaler. The leaflet supplied with your inhaler will also contain information on how to use the inhaler and may have pictures to help you use it correctly.

What are the most common side effects I might experience?

Ipratropium bromide can irritate the nose and mouth. It can also cause a cough and dry mouth. Other possible side effects include:

- headache
- constipation
- diarrhoea
- nausea
- vomiting
- difficulty passing urine.

Side effects may be more common with the higher doses.

What other information should I know about this medicine?

Ipratropium bromide will help to prevent respiratory secretions from forming, but it will not have any effect on secretions which have already formed.

Please remember to order your repeat prescription with a few days spare, to allow it to be processed.

It is important not to order more medication than you need. Even if you return them to the pharmacy in future, they cannot be reused after they have been labelled for your use and must be disposed of.

Your medication needs to be kept in a safe place out of the reach of children.

It is important to store your medication in the original container.

Return ALL unused medication to a pharmacy.

If for any reason a you or your carer are UNABLE to go to the pharmacy, medication can be disposed of at home. However, it is important NOT to flush it down the toilet as this pollutes the water. Medication can be disposed of in a general waste bin, ensuring that cannot be accessed by children or animals, although disposal at a pharmacy is preferable.

Any other important information?

As well as taking the medicine, changing how you are sitting or lying down can sometimes help.

To prevent having an uncomfortable dry mouth, regular mouth care should be carried out. You should clean your teeth at least twice a day. Regular sips or sprays of water or artificial saliva preparations can be used. Your lips should also be moistened with a lip moisturiser, such as a lip balm.