

Let's Talk About...

Anticoagulation therapy: Enoxaparin

What is Enoxaparin?

Enoxaparin (also known as Lovenox[®]) is a common anticoagulant (AN-tie-coh-AG-you-lant), medicine used to help prevent blood clots. If your child has a heart, lung, or blood vessel disease, enoxaparin therapy may help.

How does enoxaparin work?

Although enoxaparin is sometimes called a blood thinner, it doesn't actually thin the blood. It won't break up existing blood clots, either. Enoxaparin blocks clotting proteins from forming clots. By doing this, it:

- Keeps existing clots from getting bigger.
- Prevents new clots from forming.

However, if enoxaparin blocks too many proteins, your child can start bleeding. It's important to find the right balance.

Why does my child need enoxaparin injections?

Your child may need enoxaparin injections (shots):

- If they already have a blood clot in a blood vessel or in their lungs.
- If they have certain heart problems that put them at high risk for a clot.
- If they have had certain surgeries.
- If they are taking warfarin (Coumadin[®]) and it is not working well.
- If they are sick or injured and can't move around much.

How do I know if my child can have enoxaparin injections?

Before your child starts enoxaparin injections, tell the healthcare provider if your child:

- Has bleeding, stomach or intestine problems, ulcers, or kidney or liver disease.
- Has had a recent surgery.
- Has had a stroke.
- Has ever had heart valve problems or surgery.
- Is allergic to any medicines.
- Is allergic to pork products, since some anticoagulant medicine is made from pigs. (If your faith has dietary laws against pork, talk to your religious leader.)
- Is taking other medicine, including over-the-counter drugs, herbs, and supplements.



How do I get enoxaparin for my child?

- Your child's healthcare provider will prescribe enoxaparin. If the dose is available in a prefilled syringe (30, 40, 60, 80, 100, or 120mg), you can get the prescription at a pharmacy.
- If your child's dose is not available in a prefilled syringe, a home health company may be able to provide prefilled syringes (depending on your insurance). When insurance does not cover home health, the pharmacy can give you a vial of enoxaparin to draw up doses at home.

Is generic enoxaparin okay for my child?

Many children take generic enoxaparin instead of the name-brand medicine (Lovenox®), because it costs less. The generic and name-brand medicine are not different.

How do I give my child enoxaparin injections?

Give your child exactly the dose their healthcare provider prescribed. Your child's dose of enoxaparin is first determined by age and weight. Your child's healthcare provider will show you how much medicine and where to inject it under your child's skin.

Enoxaparin injections come in a prefilled syringe or vial. You will need to inject it once or twice a day based on the healthcare provider's directions.

If you can't use a prefilled syringe, you'll need to draw up the medicine from a vial. Check the expiration date on the medicine vial each time to make sure it hasn't expired. Once the vial is opened, it expires after 28 days. Your child's healthcare provider will show you how to draw the dose from the vial and inject the medicine.

When do I give my child enoxaparin injections?

Your child's dose schedule depends on their age and can change based on test results. Ask your child's healthcare provider for exact times and doses. Below are general guidelines:

- Give your child the enoxaparin at the same time every day. They may need injections once or twice daily, depending on why they are using the medicine.
- If you forget to give your child an enoxaparin dose, give it to them as soon as you remember. If it's time for their next dose, do not give two doses at the same time. Call your child's healthcare provider for instructions.

What follow-up tests will my child need?

When your child is taking enoxaparin, they may need blood tests to check their anti-factor Xa level. An anti-factor Xa test measures the blood's ability to form a clot. This test ensures your child is taking the right dose of enoxaparin.

A healthcare provider must draw your child's anti-factor Xa level 4–6 hours after your child takes an enoxaparin dose. The blood must be drawn at this time, or it will have to be drawn again.

How often does my child need to be tested?

When your child first starts enoxaparin injections, they will have an anti-factor Xa test every day. Your child will also need a daily test if their healthcare provider changes their dose. Once your child's anti-factor Xa values become stable, they'll need this blood test at least once a month. Make sure your child goes to each blood test appointment so you know they are taking the right dose of enoxaparin.

What is a normal anti-factor Xa value?

The target range for the anti-factor Xa level is between 0.5 and 1. If your child's anti-factor Xa test is out of range, their healthcare provider will make sure the test was given at the right time. They may also adjust your child's dose.

If the level is above 1, your child may have a higher risk for bleeding. If the level is below 0.5, your child may have a higher risk for clotting.

What can I give my child to help with pain?

Your child may take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain. However, do not give your child aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), or bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto Bismol®).

Don't give your child herbal supplements without asking their healthcare provider first.

What should my child avoid when taking enoxaparin?

When your child takes enoxaparin, an injury could cause serious bleeding. Ask your child's healthcare provider before your child does any activity where they could get hurt. This includes contact or extreme sports.

When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call your child's healthcare provider:

- If your child starts or stops a medicine or changes the dose.
- If your child was told to stop taking enoxaparin before a surgery or dental procedure. Call their healthcare provider at least 2 weeks before the scheduled procedure, if possible.
- If your child is bruising more than usual.
- If your child has abnormal bleeding from the nose or gums.
- If your child has pink, red, or dark brown urine.
- If your child has minor bleeding or bright red blood from the bowel.
- If your child has increased menstrual bleeding.
- If your child has pain, warmth, or unusual skin color around the injection site (in rare cases, enoxaparin can cause the skin to break down).

When should I take my child to the emergency room?

Call 911 or take your child to the emergency room if they have:

- A bad headache and stiff neck that come on suddenly
- Black, tar-like, or bloody stool
- Sudden dizziness, faintness, or weakness
- Sudden pain in a joint (ankle, knee, wrist, elbow, shoulder, or hip)
- Cloudy vision that comes on suddenly
- Cold or numbness in their arm or leg
- Sudden chest pain, with or without shortness of breath
- Trouble talking or trouble moving one side of their body
- Excessive bleeding that you can't stop

What if I have questions about enoxaparin?

If you have questions about enoxaparin treatment, talk to your child's healthcare provider.

Notes

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