



University
Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Penthrox (‘green whistle’ inhaler) pain relief in children

Paediatrics

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about Pentrox pain relief medicine.

It explains:

- what Pentrox is
- why Pentrox is the right medicine to give your child to relieve their pain
- when Pentrox should not be used
- how to help your child use their Pentrox
- the side effects that Pentrox may have.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your child has a painful injury or needs a medical procedure which could be painful for them to have without pain relief. Your child's healthcare professional thinks that Pentrox is the right pain-relief medicine for them to have.

Reading this information can:

- help you to know what to expect when your child has Pentrox
- make sure your child is safe and has good pain relief when they take Pentrox.

What is Pentrox?

Pentrox is a strong pain-relieving medicine. It is a vapour (tiny droplets in air) that your child breathes in (inhales) through a small handheld device (inhaler). This is often called the 'green whistle'.



Picture of a Pentrox 'green whistle' inhaler

The vapour in the Pentrox inhaler contains a medicine called methoxyflurane. In the past this has been used as an anaesthetic for operations. When it is used for this, it is at much higher doses than there are in the Pentrox inhaler.

Is Pentrox safe for my child?

Your child gets a very small, safe, dose of methoxyflurane when they use a Pentrox inhaler for pain relief.

Pentrox:

- is not yet licensed for use in children in the UK but
- it has been used safely and widely in children in other countries (such as Australia) for over 30 years.

As well as UHSx, some other hospitals in the UK are also starting to use it in children. We have no reason to believe that Pentrox is unsafe for children.

Why is Pentrox a good medicine for my child to have for pain relief in hospital?

Pentrox:

- provides fast and effective pain relief
- lets your child control their inhaler and use it as needed
- means your child is less likely to need injections or other pain medicines.

Are there any things that mean Pentrox may not be right for my child (contraindications to using Pentrox)?

Pentrox may not be right for your child if they:

- have had a bad reaction to anaesthetic medicines in the past
- have liver, kidney or heart problems which are not minor
- take certain medicines that affect the liver or kidneys
- have a close family member who has had a condition called malignant hyperthermia.

Do

- ✓ tell your child's doctor or nurse about any medical conditions your child has and any medicines they are taking.

How can I help my child to use their Pentrox inhaler?

A member of staff will show your child how to use their inhaler.

- **Do** make sure that your child holds and uses the inhaler themselves.
- They should breathe in and out through the whistle. This helps to prevent the vapour escaping into the air.
- The vapour has a strong fruity taste. It may cause your child to cough when they first breathe it in.
- Pain relief usually begins within a few breaths. Your child can continue using it as needed.

Be aware,

if your child needs to have a painful procedure, they may need to use the inhaler often or nearly all the time while we do it. This will give them stronger pain relief.

What side effects might my child get from using the Pentrox inhaler?

Like all medicines, Pentrox can have side effects. Some of the more usual side effects of Pentrox include,

feeling:

- dizzy
- drowsy
- sick.

having:

- a headache
- coughing
- double vision
- flushed and itchy skin.

If your child becomes very drowsy, they will be unable to inhale the vapour. This means that they will soon stop being so drowsy as the medicine wears off very quickly.

Serious side effects are very rare but can include:

- allergic reactions
- liver or kidney problems.

Be aware,

if your child becomes unwell after using Pentrox, please return to hospital. Tell staff that your child has used Pentrox.

Where can I get further information about Pentrox if I need it after I have read this information?

Please ask a member of your child's A&E healthcare team.

**Today's research is tomorrow's treatments.
That's why UHSx is proud to be a research-active Trust.**

Find out how you can get involved. Visit our website
[www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/research-and-innovation/
information-for-patients-and-public](http://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/research-and-innovation/information-for-patients-and-public)
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**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in The Alex, Haywards Heath, St. Richards and Worthing**

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