

Anti-arrhythmic agents

Propafenone (Rythmol®)

Pharmacy Services

This is intended as a general reference.

It does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.



What is propafenone used for?

Propafenone (say *pro-paf-en-own*) is used to control irregular heart rhythms.

In atrial fibrillation, this medication is known as a “rhythm control” agent. It helps keep the heart beat steady and prevent it from beating too quickly.

Why should I take this medication?

The heart muscle can weaken and the heart does not pump as well when contractions are fast, irregular, and uncoordinated.

When the heart beats too quickly, some blood gets trapped in the heart chambers. This blood can clot. Blood clots can lead to a heart attack, stroke, or the heart stopping (cardiac arrest).

Propafenone helps the heart pump well and at a regular pace which should improve your symptoms.

How does propafenone work?

Your heart is controlled by an electrical system. It triggers the heart to beat at a regular pace. When the heart's electrical systems is disrupted for any reason, heart beats become irregular and disorganized. We call these arrhythmias (say *ah-rith-mee-uhz*).

Propafenone controls these disorganized electrical impulses, allowing the heart to slow down and beat regularly.

What should I expect?

While taking propafenone, your heart rate will be slower and the effects of the irregular heart beat should improve.

Even if you feel well, keep taking propafenone until your doctor tells you something different.

How do I take propafenone?

- Take your propafenone exactly as prescribed.
- People usually take it 2 or more times a day.
- You can take this medication with or without food.
- It is best to take this medication at the same time each day so you don't miss a dose.
- If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you remember the next day or close to the time of your next dose, just take your next scheduled dose.
Do not double the dose to make up for the missed dose.
- **Do not** stop taking this medication or adjust your dose without first talking to your pharmacist or doctor.

What should I watch for?

You might have some unwanted side effects. The most common side effects are:

- dizziness
- feeling sick to the stomach (nausea)
- throwing up (vomiting)
- a metallic taste in the mouth
- constipation

To reduce these effects, try the following activities:

- Change positions slowly when getting up from sitting or lying positions.
- Take the medicine with food.
- Eat high fibre foods such as fruits, vegetables, bran, and whole grains.
- Increase how much fluid you drink each day. Water is best.

Contact your pharmacist or doctor if any side effects bother you or get worse.

Other helpful points

Propafenone can interact with a number of medicines. Check with your pharmacist or doctor before starting new medications, including medicines you buy without a prescription, herbal medicines, and alternative and natural products.

Some medications should not be taken during pregnancy. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.