Digoxin Toxicity (Digitek™, Lanoxin®, Lanoxicaps®)

Digoxin (Lanoxin®, Lanoxicaps®) is a medication that can help a weakened heart (*congestive heart failure*) to function properly. Digoxin increases the strength of the heart muscle, helps to maintain a normal heart rhythm, and helps to remove excess water from the body. Digoxin can relieve problems (*symptoms*) of congestive heart failure. This is a condition that reduces the ability of the heart to pump enough blood through the body. These symptoms include swelling of the feet and legs, difficulty breathing, and extreme tiredness or weakness. It can also help to regulate heart rhythm problems. Generic digoxin *tablets* are available, but not generic digoxin *capsules*.

Digoxin is a good medication for helping the heart, but *toxicity* (acts like a poison) occurs when too much medication is taken. The body may begin to over-react, or get side effects, from the dose.

SIDE EFFECTS THAT YOU SHOULD REPORT TO YOUR CAREGIVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

- Anxiousness or nervousness
- Changes in color vision (more yellow color), blurred vision, eyes sensitive to light, light flashes, or halos around bright lights.
- Changes in behavior, mood, mental ability, or confusion.
- Chest pain or irregular heartbeats (*palpitations*).
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Dizziness or drowsiness
- Fainting spells, fast or irregular heartbeat (more likely in children).
- Headache
- Irregular, slow heartbeat (less than 50 beats per minute)
- Loss of appetite, feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*), vomiting, or stomach pain.
- Skin rash or itching
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, unusual bruising, or pinpoint red spots on the skin.
- Weakness or tiredness
- Breast enlargement in men and women and sexual problems such as impotence.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can. If it is nearly time for your next dose, take only that one dose. **Do not take double or extra doses.**
- Swallow medications with water. It is best to take digoxin on an empty stomach, at least 1 hour before, or 2 hours after meals. Take your doses at regular intervals. Do not take your medicine more often than directed.
- Tell your prescriber or health care professional about all other medicines you are taking, including non-prescription medicines, nutritional supplements, or herbal products.
- Also tell your prescriber or health care professional if you are a frequent user of drinks with caffeine or alcohol, if you smoke, or use street drugs. These may affect the way your medicine works. Check with your health care professional before stopping or starting any of your medications.
- Watch your diet. Less digoxin may be absorbed from the stomach if you have a diet high in bran fiber.
- If you are going to have surgery, tell your caregiver that you are taking digoxin.
- Do not take antacids, or treat yourself with non-prescription medicines for pain, allergies, coughs or colds, without advice from your caregiver.
- Check your heart rate (pulse) and blood pressure regularly. Ask your caregiver what your heart rate and blood pressure should be, and when you should contact him or her. You may also require regular blood tests and electrocardiograms for follow-up.

Digoxin tablets are easily confused with other look-alike tablets. If you take other tablets that look similar, ask

your pharmacist how to avoid mix-ups and complications.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Fainting spells, or a fast or irregular heart beat.
- A slow heart beat (under 50 beats per minute).

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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