



## CLINICAL GUIDELINE

# Flecainide Pill in the Pocket (PITP)

A guideline is intended to assist healthcare professionals in the choice of disease-specific treatments.

Clinical judgement should be exercised on the applicability of any guideline, influenced by individual patient characteristics. Clinicians should be mindful of the potential for harmful polypharmacy and increased susceptibility to adverse drug reactions in patients with multiple morbidities or frailty.

If, after discussion with the patient or carer, there are good reasons for not following a guideline, it is good practice to record these and communicate them to others involved in the care of the patient.

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### Important Note:

The Intranet version of this document is the only version that is maintained. Any printed copies should therefore be viewed as 'Uncontrolled' and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.

# Flecainide Pill in the Pocket (PITP) Guidance

To be used only on specialist cardiology advice



## Background and Indication

Some patients may present with episodes of recurrent atrial fibrillation (AF) infrequently and are haemodynamically stable but remain symptomatic enough to require attendance to Emergency Department or hospitalisation.

After their initial presentation to secondary care, Pill in the Pocket (PITP) strategy for flecainide can be prescribed on discharge as a strategy for prompt restoration of acute onset AF back to sinus rhythm without the need for emergency room intervention. PITP is based on single self-administered dose of flecainide in patients with infrequent symptoms.

Flecainide PITP should **ONLY** be initiated by Cardiology specialists in secondary care. It may be started in selected patients who have not had flecainide as an inpatient if deemed suitable by the Cardiology specialist. Flecainide PITP should **NOT** be used in patients with significant coronary heart disease or structural heart disease.

PITP strategy has only been studied in specific class 1c antiarrhythmic drugs in AF. It should not be used for other drugs for other arrhythmias.

## Dosing

Weight	Patient <b>NOT</b> on maintenance flecainide	Patient <b>on</b> maintenance flecainide (e.g. 100mg twice daily) <i>= Dose minus morning maintenance dose</i>
70kg or more	300mg as a single dose	200mg if normally on 100mg BD Maximum 300mg daily
< 70kg	200mg as a single dose	100mg if normally on 100mg BD Maximum 300mg daily

Please see accompanying patient information leaflet to be handed out to patients on initiation of flecainide PITP.

## References:

1. European Society of Cardiology. *2024 ESC Guidelines for the management of atrial fibrillation developed in collaboration with the European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EACTS)*. *European Heart Journal* (2024) 45, 3314–3414.
2. American College of Cardiology. Markman TM, Jarrah AA, Tian Y, et al. *Safety of Pill-in-the-Pocket Class 1C Antiarrhythmic Drugs for Atrial Fibrillation*. *JACC Clinical Electrophysiology* 2022;8:1515-1520.
3. Alboni P, Botto G, Baldi M, Luzi M, Russo V, Gianfranchi L et al. *Outpatient Treatment of Recent-Onset Atrial Fibrillation with the “Pill-in-the-Pocket” Approach*. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 2004;351:2384-2391.
4. *Electronic Medicines Compendium. Summary of Product Characteristics - Flecainide 100mg tablets*. <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3086/smpc>.

Patient Details



## Information about **Flecainide** **'Pill in the Pocket' (PITP)**

### **Why have I been given this leaflet?**

Your doctor has prescribed you flecainide to treat paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation. Atrial Fibrillation is an irregular and often very rapid heart rhythm. Paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation is when the symptoms come and go. Flecainide helps regulate your heart's rhythm.

### **What is 'Pill in the Pocket'?**

'Pill in the Pocket' is a type of treatment for paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation where you experience Atrial Fibrillation that comes and goes.

Rather than taking medication regularly you only take this medicine when you experience an attack or episode of paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation. When you take this medicine, it should get your heart rhythm back to normal. Your doctor will carefully assess you before they offer you this treatment.

### **When to take the medicine?**

You have been prescribed flecainide **100mg**; **200mg** or **300mg** which you should take when you experience palpitations which feel like a thumping or fluttering sensation in your chest which last for 20 minutes or more. After taking the medicine, take a rest by sitting or lying down until palpitations go away.

**Do not take more than one oral dose during 24 hour period.**

## What should happen after the medicine?

Your symptoms should resolve within 4 hours after taking the medicine. If your symptoms continue after 4 hours or come back within 24 hours after taking the medicine, **do not take more doses**.

## When should I get medical help?

You should get medical help if you feel more unwell after taking the medicine.

Consider phoning NHS24 (111) if you experience any of the following symptoms along with palpitations.

- Fainting
- Chest pain or tightness
- Severe significant change of breathing

## Recurrent symptoms

Speak to your doctor if you require flecainide more than once every 3 months.

## Any questions

If you have any questions, please speak to your doctor.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/heart-and-blood-vessels/conditions/atrial-fibrillation/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/atrial-fibrillation>