PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Aminolevulinic Acid (Topical

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Ameluz; Levulan Kerastick

Brand Names: Canada

Levulan Kerastick

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat a precancerous skin problem called actinic keratosis.
- It is used to treat a type of skin cancer called basal cell carcinoma.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are allergic to porphyrins.
- If your skin is sensitive to light.
- If you have porphyria.
- If you are taking any drugs that may make your skin more sensitive to light. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- The treated area may be more sensitive to light. Light may cause a burning or stinging feeling. Protect the treated area and skin around it from sun, sunlamps, bright indoor lights, and tanning beds after this drug is put on and for as long as you have been told by your doctor. Wear the proper covering like a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeve shirt, or gloves to protect the treated skin from light. Sunscreens will not help.
- Do not use sunscreen or other drugs on affected part.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs or products on your skin. This includes soaps.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- People using this drug may get skin reactions where this drug is used or around the area. These reactions may include blistering, burning, crusting, dryness, flaking, hardness or thickening, itching, oozing, redness, scabbing, scaling, stinging, or swelling. Most of the time, these reactions will go away within a few weeks after using this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that bothers you or if the reaction makes it hard to keep putting this drug on. Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that causes problems with daily living.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the

baby.

Solution:

- This drug has alcohol in it. Very bad irritation may happen if covered or bandaged for longer than 3 hours. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Bleeding where this drug is used.
- Eyelid swelling.
- Change in color of skin where drug is used.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Memory problems may rarely happen with the use of this drug and light therapy. Most of the time, these memory problems go back to normal after a short amount of time. Call your doctor right away if you have memory problems or loss, or if you feel confused.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Chills.

- Headache.
- Dry eyes.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Your doctor or other healthcare provider will put on the skin.
- Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn). Keep away from the eyelid or the area around the eye.
- If you get this drug in any of these areas, rinse well with water.
- This drug is used with light therapy.
- Do not wash the treated part before you have the light therapy.
- You will need to protect your eyes during the light therapy. Follow what your doctor has told you.
- If you cannot have the light therapy after this drug has been put on, talk with your doctor. Avoid bright light for as long as you have been told by your doctor.
- Coverings (bandages, dressings) may be put on the affected area after this drug is put on. Leave on for as long as your doctor has told you.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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