PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Epoprostenol

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

Flolan [DSC]; Veletri

Brand Names: Canada

Caripul; Flolan

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat high blood pressure in the lungs.

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 have heart failure (weak heart).
- If you have ever gotten fluid in the lungs with use of this drug.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Check your blood pressure as you have been told.
- Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling your doctor. Signs of high pressure in the lungs like shortness of breath, dizziness, or weakness may get worse. Talk with your doctor.
- Always have a backup system close by in case you need to use it.
- 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.

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.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.

- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Shortness of breath.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Dark urine.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Pale skin.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Swelling of belly.
- Redness or swelling where the injection is given.
- Skin sores.

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:

- Anxiety.
- Irritation where the shot is given.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Dizziness or headache.
- Flushing.
- Jaw pain.

- Back, bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Flu-like signs. These include headache, weakness, fever, shakes, aches, pains, and sweating.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.

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.

- It is given into the vein nonstop.
- It is likely that treatment will be needed for a long time, maybe years. You will need to closely follow how to use this drug and how to care for the catheter and infusion pump. Talk with the doctor if you have questions.
- Your doctor may teach you how to give this drug.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Be sure you know what types of materials and tubing to use with this drug. If you are not sure, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- It is important that the infusion does not stop unless your doctor tells you otherwise. If you miss a dose or if the infusion stops, get medical help right away.

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

- Store as you have been told by the doctor.
- After opening or mixing this drug with fluids, be sure you know how to store this drug and how long the drug is good for.
- 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.

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.
- 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.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

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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