PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Formoterol

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

Perforomist

Brand Names: Canada

Foradil [DSC]; Oxeze Turbuhaler

Warning

- Drugs like this one may raise the chance of asthma-related deaths in people with asthma who do **not** also use an inhaled steroid. It appears that this effect does not apply to people with COPD. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Drugs like this one may raise the chance of asthma-related hospital stays in children and teenagers with asthma who do **not** also use an inhaled steroid. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Do not use this drug to treat asthma if you are **not** also using an inhaled steroid. Do not use this drug to treat asthma if your asthma is well controlled by an inhaled steroid.

What is this drug used for?
Inhaler (powder):

- It is used to treat asthma.
- It is used to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise.

Capsules for breathing in:

- It is used to treat asthma.
- It is used to treat COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

Liquid for breathing in:

- It is used to treat COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).
- This drug is not approved to treat asthma. Talk with your doctor.

All products:

- Do not use this drug to treat intense flare-ups of shortness of breath. Use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler). If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

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

All products:

- 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 a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

All inhaler products:

- If you have a milk allergy.
- If the patient is a child younger than 6 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 6 years of age.

Liquid for breathing in:

- If you have asthma.
- If the patient is a child. This drug is not approved for use in children.

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.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), this drug may

sometimes raise blood sugar. Talk with your doctor about how to keep your blood sugar under control.

- To help control and improve your breathing problem, it is important that you do not run out of this drug. Be sure to get a refill before you run out.
- Call your doctor right away if your breathing problems get worse, if your rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) does not work as well, or if you need to use your rescue inhaler more often.
- Do not take more of this drug or use it more often than you have been told. Deaths have happened when too much of this type of drug has been taken. Talk with your doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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 high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Signs of too much acid in the blood (acidosis) like confusion; fast breathing; fast heartbeat; a heartbeat that does not feel normal; very bad stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up; feeling very sleepy; shortness of breath; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- This drug can cause very bad breathing problems right after you take a dose. Sometimes, this may be life-

threatening. If you have trouble breathing, breathing that is worse, wheezing, or coughing after using this drug, use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) and get medical help right away.

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:

- Headache.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Shakiness.
- Dry mouth.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.

All inhaler products:

- For breathing in only by an inhaler into the lungs.
- Put the cap back on after you are done using your dose.
- Do not use a spacer with the inhaler.
- Use new inhaler with each refill.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Inhaler (powder):

- If using this drug to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise, use right before exercise.

Capsules for breathing in:

- Do not swallow capsule. The contents of the capsule will be inhaled into the lungs.
- Do not take this drug out of the blister pack until you are ready to take it. Take this drug right away after opening

the blister pack. Do not store the removed drug for future use.

Liquid for breathing in:

- For breathing in only as a liquid (solution) by a special machine (nebulizer) into the lungs.
- Only use the type of nebulizer that you have been told to use. If you are not sure what type of nebulizer to use, talk with the doctor.
- Each vial is for one use only. Use the vial right after opening. Throw away any part not used after you use a dose.
- Do not mix other drugs in nebulizer.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

All inhaler products:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it has been 6 hours or more since the missed dose, skip

the missed dose and go back to your normal time.

- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is taken on an as needed basis for asthma caused by working out. Do not take more often than every 12 hours unless told to do so by your doctor.

Liquid for breathing in:

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

All inhaler products:

- Store at room temperature.

Capsules for breathing in:

- Store this drug in the blister pack that it comes in.
- Protect from heat.

Liquid for breathing in:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 3 months. If stored at room temperature and not used within 3 months, throw this drug away.
- Store unused containers in foil pouch until use.

- Protect from heat and light.

All products:

- 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

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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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