Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ragweed Pollen Allergen Extract

This information from Lexicomp® 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

Ragwitek

Brand Names: Canada

Ragwitek

Warning

- Allergic reactions have happened with this drug. Rarely, some reactions can be very bad or life-threatening. Talk with the doctor.
- The first dose will be given in a doctor's office.
- Your doctor will give you another drug (epinephrine) to use in case of an allergic reaction. Someone else may have to give you the shot. Be sure you and other people who may need to give the shot know how and when to use it. Certain drugs may make epinephrine not work as well or raise the chance of side effects. This includes some drugs used to treat depression, heart problems, or high blood pressure. There are many drugs that interact with epinephrine. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist to make sure it is safe to take epinephrine with all of your drugs.
- Do not take this drug if you have very bad asthma or asthma that is not controlled.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat allergies caused by ragweed pollen.

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 had a reaction in the mouth after using another drug like this one.
- If you have ever had eosinophilic esophagitis.
- If you have sores or other irritation in your mouth or throat.

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 will be having dental work or surgery in the mouth,

talk with your doctor. You will need to stop taking this drug for a time.

- This drug will not help allergy signs get better if the signs are already present. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are getting allergy shots or taking other drugs like this one under the tongue, talk with your doctor. Using these drugs at the same time may raise the chance of a very bad allergic reaction.
- This drug is most useful if started before contact with the allergen. Take at least 12 weeks before.
- If you have asthma and you have trouble breathing or your asthma gets harder to control, call your doctor right away.
- 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.
- Trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Pain with swallowing.
- Heartburn.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Flushing.
- Shortness of breath.
- Cough.
- Severe diarrhea.
- Severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach cramps.
- Severe stomach pain.
- Mouth 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:

- Itching in the ear, mouth, or tongue.
- Numbness or tingling in the mouth.
- Throat irritation.
- Upset stomach.
- Stomach pain.

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.

- Be sure your hands are dry before you touch this drug.
- 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.
- Place under tongue and let dissolve all the way. Do not chew, suck or swallow tablet.
- Do not swallow for at least 1 minute after putting this drug in your mouth.
- Do not eat or drink while the tablet is dissolving or for 5 minutes after the tablet dissolves.
- Wash hands after use.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you miss more than 1 day of taking this drug, talk with your doctor.

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

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- 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.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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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