MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Levofloxacin (Systemic

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

Levaquin [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

ACT Levofloxacin; APO-Levofloxacin; JAMP-Levofloxacin; MINT-Levofloxacin; RIVA-Levofloxacin; SANDOZ Levofloxacin

Warning

- This drug may cause severe side effects like irritated or torn tendons; nerve problems in the arms, hands, legs, or feet; and nervous system problems. These can happen alone or at the same time. They can happen within hours to weeks after starting this drug. Some of these effects may not go away, and may lead to disability or death.
- The chance of irritated or torn tendons is greater in heart, kidney, or lung transplant patients and in people taking steroid drugs. Tendon problems can happen as long as several months after treatment. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has pain, bruising, or swelling in the back of the ankle, shoulder, hand, or other joints. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child is not able to move or bear weight on a joint or if your child hears or feels a snap or pop.
- Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has signs of nerve

problems. These may include not able to handle heat or cold; change in sense of touch; or burning, numbness, tingling, pain, or weakness in the arms, hands, legs, or feet.

- Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of nervous system problems. These may include anxiety, bad dreams, trouble sleeping, change in eyesight, dizziness, feeling confused, feeling nervous or agitated, feeling restless, hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there), new or worse behavior or mood changes like depression or thoughts of suicide, seizures, or very bad headaches.
- Do not give this drug if your child has myasthenia gravis. Very bad and sometimes deadly breathing problems have happened with this drug in people who have myasthenia gravis.
- For some health problems, this drug is only for use when other drugs cannot be used or have not worked. Talk with the doctor to be sure that the benefits of this drug are more than the risks.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat bacterial infections.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Long QT on ECG, low magnesium levels, or low potassium levels.
- If your child has ever had any of these health problems: Nerve problems or tendon problems.
- If your child has had tendons get irritated or torn when taking this drug

or an alike drug in the past.

- If your child has an aortic aneurysm (ballooning or bulging of the aorta, the main blood vessel that comes out of the heart) or is at risk for this health problem. This includes if your child has other blood vessel problems, high blood pressure, or certain health problems like Marfan syndrome or Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.
- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Your child may need to avoid breast-feeding a baby for some time after getting this drug.

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.

- High and low blood sugar has happened with drugs like this one. Most of the time, low blood sugar happened in people with diabetes who were taking drugs that lower blood sugar like insulin. Very low blood sugar has led to coma and sometimes death. Check blood sugar as you have been told by the doctor.
- Tell your child’s doctor if your child has signs of high or low blood sugar like breath that smells like fruit, dizziness, fast breathing, fast heartbeat, feeling confused, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, flushing, headache, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, shaking, or sweating.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.
- Your child may get sunburned more easily. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects from the sun.
- Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your child’s doctor.
- Rarely, very bad and sometimes deadly effects have happened with this drug. These include muscle or joint, kidney, liver, blood, and other problems. Talk with the doctor if you have questions.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some joint and tendon problems may be higher in children.

If your child is pregnant:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child’s 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 child’s doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Shortness of breath.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble walking.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- White patches in mouth.
- Ringing in ears.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Not able to focus.
- Memory problems or loss.
- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal

necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

- Diarrhea is common with antibiotics. Rarely, a severe form called C diff–associated diarrhea (CDAD) may happen. Sometimes, this has led to a deadly bowel problem. CDAD may happen during or a few months after taking antibiotics. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has stomach pain, cramps, or very loose, watery, or bloody stools. Check with your child's doctor before treating diarrhea.
- A type of abnormal heartbeat (prolonged QT interval) can happen with this drug. Call the doctor right away if your child has a fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, or if your child passes out.
- A rare but severe problem with the main blood vessel that comes out of the heart (aorta) has happened within 2 months after taking drugs like this one. This includes tears or bursting of the aorta. This can lead to severe bleeding and even death. The cause for this effect is not known. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has sudden pain in the stomach, chest, or back that is severe and does not go 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Upset stomach.
- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Headache.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child’s doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Tablets:

- Give this drug with or without food.

Liquid:

- Give liquid (solution) on an empty stomach. Give 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

Liquid and tablets:

- Give this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child’s doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.
- Do not give your child dairy products, antacids, didanosine, sucralfate, multivitamins, or other products that contain calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, or zinc within 2 hours before or 2 hours after taking this drug.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Liquid and tablets:

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is less than 8 hours until your child’s next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child’s normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Injection:

- Call your child’s doctor to find out what to do.

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

All oral products:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Injection:

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

All dose forms:

- 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 child’s symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child’s doctor.
- Do not share your child’s drug with others and do not give anyone else’s drug to your child.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child’s 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 any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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

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