Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Sodium Oxybate

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

Lumryz; Xyrem

Brand Names: Canada

Xyrem

Warning

- This drug can cause severe side effects. These may include breathing problems, low blood pressure, changes in alertness, and passing out. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Abuse and misuse of this drug by itself or with certain other drugs may cause seizures, slow or shallow breathing, changes in alertness, coma, or death.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat sudden loss of muscle tone (cataplexy) in patients with narcolepsy.
- It is used to treat a lot of sleepiness during the day in patients with narcolepsy.

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 liver disease.
- If you have succinic semialdehyde dehydrogenase deficiency.
- If you drink alcohol or take any drugs that have alcohol.
- If you are taking any drugs or natural products used for sleep. There are many products used for sleep. 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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Long-term or regular use of this drug may lead to dependence. Stopping this drug all of a sudden may lead to signs of withdrawal. Talk to your doctor before you lower the dose or stop this drug. You will need to follow your doctor’s instructions. Tell your doctor if you have any bad effects.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert for at least 6 hours after taking this drug. Avoid these tasks or actions until you feel fully awake.

- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before you use marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- Many drugs interact with this drug and can raise the chance of side effects like deadly breathing problems. Talk with your doctor and pharmacist to make sure it is safe to use this drug with all of your drugs.
- After taking this drug, it is likely you will fall asleep very fast (most of the time within 5 to 15 minutes). The time that it takes to fall asleep can change from night to night. Falling asleep all of a sudden when standing or rising from bed has led to falls and the need to go to the hospital. Be sure you take this drug while in bed and lie down right away after taking it. Talk with your doctor.
- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.
- 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 depression, thoughts of suicide, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, thinking that is not normal, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.

- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Feeling confused, not able to focus, or change in behavior.
- A change in weight without trying.
- Appetite changes.
- Sleepwalking.
- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.
- Breathing problems during sleep (sleep apnea).
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.

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:

- Dizziness.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Bedwetting.
- Shakiness.
- Headache.
- Abnormal dreams, sleep talking, or other abnormal effects during sleep.

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.

Solution:

- Take 2 doses each night.
- Take on an empty stomach. Take the first dose at least 2 hours after eating.
- This drug needs to be mixed before use. Follow how to mix as you were told by the doctor.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug.
- Use within 24 hours after you mix this drug.
- Prepare each dose before going to bed.
- Store prepared doses in the child-resistant dosing containers in a safe place.
- Take while you are in bed and lie down right away. Stay in bed after taking this drug.
- Take first dose at bedtime after getting into bed.
- Space doses by at least 2.5 to 4 hours.
- Set alarm clock to wake up for second dose.

Powder for suspension:

- Take this drug at bedtime at least 2 hours after eating.
- Mix this drug in the cup provided. Put the amount needed for your dose in about 1/3 cup (80 mL) of water. Do not use hot water. Put the cap on the cup and shake. Take this drug within 30 minutes after mixing.
- Take while you are in bed and lie down right away. Stay in bed after taking this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Solution:

- If you miss the second dose, skip the missed dose. Do not take another dose until the next night.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Powder for suspension:

- Skip the missed dose. Do not take another dose until the next day at bedtime.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Before mixing, store in the original container.
- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store this drug in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it, and where other people cannot get to it. A locked box or area may help keep this drug safe. Keep all drugs away from 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2023-05-10

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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.

Sodium Oxybate - Last updated on December 12, 2022

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