

## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Thyroid, Desiccated

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**

Adthyza; Armour Thyroid; Nature-Throid [DSC]; Niva Thyroid; NP Thyroid; Westhroid [DSC]; WP Thyroid [DSC]

### **Warning**

- Do not use this drug for weight loss. Severe and sometimes deadly side effects may happen with this drug if it is taken in large doses or with other drugs for weight loss. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

## **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to add thyroid hormone to the body.
- It is used to treat or prevent an enlarged thyroid.
- It is used to manage thyroid cancer.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## **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:  
Overactive thyroid gland or weak adrenal gland.

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.
- Do not run out of this drug.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with the doctor. This drug may sometimes affect blood sugar control. Drugs used to control high blood sugar may need to be changed.
- Check your child's blood sugar as you have been told by the doctor.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug is made from pork (pig) thyroid tissue. There is a very small risk of getting a viral disease from this drug. No cases have been reported. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

## **If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:**

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your

child and the baby.

## **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.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak.

- Appetite changes.
- A change in weight without trying.
- Diarrhea, stomach cramps, or throwing up.
- Feeling irritable, nervous, excitable, anxious, or other mood changes.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Bothered by heat.
- Sweating a lot.
- Fever.
- Muscle cramps.
- Muscle weakness.
- Flushing.
- Bone pain.

### **If your child has menstrual periods:**

- Period (menstrual) changes.

### **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:

- Hair loss may happen in some people in the first few months of using this drug. This most often goes back to normal.

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.

- It is best to give this drug on an empty stomach.
- There are different brands and forms of this drug. Do not switch between different brands or forms of this drug without calling the doctor who ordered it.
- Do not give colessevelam, colestipol, or cholestyramine within 4 hours before or 4 hours after this drug.
- Some foods like soybean flour (infant formula) may change how this drug works in your body. Talk with

your doctor.

- 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.

### **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for 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.

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

- Store at room temperature 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 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 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>.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

2023-03-28

## **Copyright**

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

---

Thyroid, Desiccated - Last updated on December 12, 2022  
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center