MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Artemether and Lumefantrine

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

Coartem

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat malaria.

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: Low potassium or magnesium levels.
- If your child has ever had a long QT on ECG or other heartbeat that is not normal.

- If a family member has a long QT on ECG or has ever died all of a sudden.
- If your child has heart problems.
- If your child has had a recent heart attack.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Amitriptyline, carbamazepine, clomipramine, flecainide, imipramine, phenytoin, rifampin, or St. John’s wort.
- 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 taking or has taken halofantrine within a month of 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.
- Your child may need to have an ECG checked while taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Avoid giving your child grapefruit and grapefruit juice.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Birth control pills and other hormone-based birth control may not work as well to prevent pregnancy. Be sure your child uses some other kind of birth control also, like a condom, when taking this drug.

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.
- 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.

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:

- Headache.
- Cough.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Fever or chills.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Decreased appetite.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.

- Give this drug with food.
- 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.

- You may crush tablet and mix with 1 or 2 teaspoons (5 or 10 mL) of water.
- If mixed, have your child swallow the mixed drug right away. Do not store for use at a later time.
- Rinse cup with more water and have your child drink.
- Tell your child’s doctor if your child throws up within 2 hours of taking an oral dose. Dose may need to be repeated.
- If your child throws up again after taking the second dose, call your child’s doctor.
- If your child is not able to eat food when your child takes this drug, talk with your child’s doctor.

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 tablets in the original container at room temperature. Keep the cap tightly closed.
- 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 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.

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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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