Aspirin, Citric Acid, and Sodium Bicarbonate

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
Alka-Seltzer Extra Strength [OTC]; Alka-Seltzer [OTC]; Medi-Seltzer [OTC]; Neutralin [OTC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat heartburn and upset stomach.
- It is used to ease pain.
- It is used to treat headaches.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

For all patients taking this drug:

- If you have an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: Asthma, bleeding problems, nose polyps, or nose irritation.
- If you are taking other drugs for any of these health problems: Arthritis, diabetes, or gout.
- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are taking any other NSAID.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are in the third trimester of pregnancy. You may also need to avoid this drug at other times during pregnancy. Talk with your doctor to see when you need to avoid taking this drug during pregnancy.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

**Children:**

- If your child has or is getting better from flu signs, chickenpox, or other viral infections.

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.
- Do not use this drug right before or after heart bypass surgery.
- Do not give to children and teenagers who have or are getting better from flu signs, chickenpox, or other viral infections due to the chance of Reye’s syndrome. Reye’s syndrome causes very bad problems to the brain and liver.
- Do not take more than what your doctor told you to take. Taking more than you are told may raise your chance of very bad side effects.
- Do not take this drug for longer than you were told by your doctor.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.

If you smoke, 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 have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.

This drug may raise the chance of severe and sometimes deadly stomach or bowel problems like ulcers or bleeding. The risk is greater in older people, and in people who have had stomach or bowel ulcers or bleeding before. These problems may occur without warning signs.

Do not give this drug to a child younger than 12 years old without first checking with the doctor.

If you are over the age of 60, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.

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 bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.

- 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, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Feeling confused.
- Very bad headache.
- Ringing in ears.
- Hearing loss.
- Very bad belly pain.
- Feeling agitated.
- Seizures.

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 you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

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.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Dissolve in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 ounces/120 mL) of water. Drink after the tablets have dissolved all the way.
- Do not swallow it whole.
- Rinse cup with more water and drink.
What do I do if I miss a dose?

- If you take this drug on a regular basis, take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is taken on an as needed basis. Do not take more often than told by the doctor.

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

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect from heat.
- 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.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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 information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

**Last Reviewed Date**

2018-03-09

**Copyright**

© 2019 Wolters Kluwer Clinical Drug Information, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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