PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Betamethasone (Systemic

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Beta 1 Kit [DSC]; Celestone Soluspan

Brand Names: Canada

Celestone Soluspan

What is this drug used for?

- It is used for many health problems like allergy signs, asthma, adrenal gland problems, blood problems, skin rashes, or swelling problems. This is not a list of all health problems that this drug may be used for. Talk with the doctor.

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

For all uses of 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 an infection.

Injection (if given in the muscle):

- If you have idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP).

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.
- Have your blood work and bone density checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- Chickenpox and measles can be very bad or even deadly in some people taking steroid drugs like this drug. Avoid being near anyone with chickenpox or measles if you have not had these health problems before. If you have been exposed to chickenpox or measles, talk with your doctor.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor. This drug may raise blood sugar.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- If you have had hepatitis B or carry the virus, talk with your doctor. Drugs like this one can cause the virus to become active. You will be tested for hepatitis B before starting this drug. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may lower how much natural steroid is in your body. If you have a

fever, an infection, surgery, or you are hurt, talk with your doctor. You may need extra doses of oral steroids. These extra steroids will help your body deal with these stresses. Carry a warning card saying that there may be times when you need extra steroids.

- Tell your doctor if you have missed a dose or recently stopped this drug and you feel very tired, weak, or shaky, or have a fast heartbeat, confusion, sweating, or dizziness.
- Long-term use may raise the chance of cataracts or glaucoma. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your eye pressure checked if you are on this drug for a long time. Talk with your doctor.
- This drug may cause weak bones (osteoporosis) with long-term use. Talk with your doctor to see if you have a higher chance of weak bones or if you have any questions.
- You may need to lower how much salt is in your diet and take extra potassium. Talk with your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- A type of cancer (Kaposi's sarcoma) has happened in people taking drugs like this one for a long time. Talk with the doctor.
- In some people who have pheochromocytoma, it has gotten worse after taking this type of drug. Sometimes, this may be deadly. If you have pheochromocytoma, talk with the doctor.
- Very bad health problems have happened when drugs like this one have been given into the spine (epidural). These include paralysis, loss of eyesight, stroke, and sometimes death. It is not known if drugs like this one are safe and effective when given into the spine. These drugs are not approved for this use. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.

- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may lower sperm counts. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Some products have benzyl alcohol. If possible, avoid products with benzyl alcohol in newborns or infants. Serious side effects can happen in these children with some doses of benzyl alcohol, including if given with other drugs that have benzyl alcohol. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.
- 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 high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Signs of Cushing's syndrome like weight gain in the upper back or belly,

moon face, severe headache, or slow healing.

- Signs of a weak adrenal gland like a severe upset stomach or throwing up, severe dizziness or passing out, muscle weakness, feeling very tired, mood changes, decreased appetite, or weight loss.
- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Skin changes (pimples, stretch marks, slow healing, hair growth).
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm.
- Period (menstrual) changes.
- Bone or joint pain.
- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Change in the way you act.
- Depression or other mood changes.
- Seizures.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Change in eyesight.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Swelling of belly.
- Stomach pain; black, tarry, or bloody stools; throwing up blood; or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.

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:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Increased appetite.
- Weight gain.
- Restlessness.
- Sweating a lot.
- Hair thinning.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.

- It is given as a shot.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

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

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 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.
- 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. 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

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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