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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Bisacodyl

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

Bisac-Evac [OTC] [DSC]; Bisacodyl EC [OTC]; Bicolax [OTC]; Correct [OTC]; Ducodyl [OTC]; Dulcolax [OTC]; Ex-Lax Ultra [OTC]; Fleet Bisacodyl [OTC]; Fleet Laxative [OTC] [DSC]; Gentle Laxative [OTC]; GoodSense Bisacodyl EC [OTC]; GoodSense Womens Laxative [OTC]; The Magic Bullet [OTC]; Womens Laxative [OTC]

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat constipation.
- It is used as a laxative to clean out the colon before an exam.

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

### All products:

- If you have an allergy to bisacodyl or any other part 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 any of these health problems: Bowel block, belly pain, upset stomach, rectal bleeding, throwing up, or change in bowel habits lasting longer than 2 weeks.

### Tablets:

- If you cannot swallow without chewing.

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?**

### **All products:**

- 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 for more than 1 week unless told to do so by your doctor.
- Do not use other laxatives or stool softeners unless told to do so by the doctor.
- If you have rectal bleeding or you do not have a bowel movement after using this drug, talk with your doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

### **Tablets:**

- Do not take dairy products, calcium, or magnesium within 1 hour of this drug.
- Do not take antacids within 1 hour before or 1 hour after taking this drug.

### **Rectal enema:**

- Do not give to a child younger than 12 years of age.

## 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.

## 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:

### All products:

- Belly pain.
- Stomach cramps.

### All rectal products:

- Burning.

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.

### **Tablets:**

- Take with a full glass of water.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

### **All rectal products:**

- Wash your hands before and after use.

### **Suppository:**

- Use suppository rectally.
- Take off foil wrapper.
- Put suppository into the rectum with gentle pressure, pointed end first. Do not handle too much.

### **Rectal enema:**

- Use enema rectally.
- Shake well before use.
- Put enema tip into the rectum with gentle pressure. Do not force.
- Squeeze the bottle until almost all the liquid is gone.

### **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.
- 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 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.
- 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 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.

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If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at \_\_\_\_\_ . After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call \_\_\_\_\_. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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