



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Calcitonin

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**

Fortical [DSC]; Miacalcin

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Calcimar

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

- It is used to treat Paget's disease.
- It is used to treat high calcium levels.
- It is used to treat soft, brittle bones (osteoporosis) in women after change of life.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

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

- If you have an allergy to calcitonin or any other 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 low calcium levels.

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.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly allergic side effects have rarely happened. Talk with your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- Have your urine checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug may add to the chance of getting some types of cancer. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are taking lithium, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while you are taking it with this drug.
- 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.

### **Nose spray:**

- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

### **For Paget's disease or osteoporosis:**

- Take calcium and vitamin D as you were told by your doctor.

### **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:

### **All products:**

- 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 low calcium levels like muscle cramps or spasms, numbness and tingling, or seizures.
- Chest pain or pressure or a fast heartbeat.
- Dizziness or passing out.

### **Nose spray:**

- Nose sores.
- Nosebleed.

### **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:

### **Nose spray:**

- Nose irritation.
- Runny nose.
- Back pain.
- Headache.
- Muscle pain.

## **Injection:**

- Flushing.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Irritation where the shot is given.

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.

## **Nose spray:**

- For the nose only.
- Follow how to use as you have been told by the doctor or read the package insert.
- Prime pump before first use.
- Blow your nose before use.
- Change nostrils every day.

## **Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin or a muscle.

- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Follow how to use as you have been told by the doctor or read the package insert.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Use 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 use 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

#### **Nose spray:**

- Store unopened nose spray bottle in a refrigerator until ready to use. Do not freeze.
- After opening, store upright at room temperature. Throw away any part not used after labeled number of doses is used or 35 days after opening.

## **Injection:**

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.

## **All products:**

- 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**

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

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