MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cephalexin

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

Keflex [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Cephalex; AURO-Cephalexin; JAMP-Cephalexin; LUPIN-Cephalexin; TEVA-Cephalexin; TEVA-Cephalexin 125; TEVA-Cephalexin 250

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat bacterial infections.

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 is taking probenecid.

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.
- Have blood work checked if your child is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes) and you test your child's urine glucose, talk with your child's doctor to find out which tests are best to use.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.

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.

- Signs of a very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Feeling confused.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.
- Seizures.
- Very bad dizziness.
- Very bad headache.
- Very bad joint pain.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Diarrhea is common with antibiotics. Rarely, a severe form called C diff–associated diarrhea (CDAD) may happen. Sometimes, this has led to a deadly bowel problem. CDAD may happen during or a few months after taking antibiotics. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has stomach pain, cramps, or very loose, watery, or bloody stools. Check with your child’s doctor before treating diarrhea.

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:

- Stomach pain or diarrhea.

- Upset stomach or throwing up.

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.

All products:

- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Use as you have been told, even if your child’s signs get better.

Liquid (suspension):

- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

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?

Tablets and capsules:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Liquid (suspension):

- Store in a refrigerator. Throw away any part not used after 2 weeks.
- Keep lid tightly closed.

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 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.

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 advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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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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