Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Docusate

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

Colace [OTC]; Diocto [OTC] [DSC]; Docu Liquid [OTC] [DSC]; Docu Soft [OTC] [DSC]; Docu [OTC] [DSC]; Docusate Mini [OTC]; Docusil [OTC] [DSC]; DocuSol Kids [OTC]; DocuSol Mini [OTC]; DOK [OTC]; Dulcolax Stool Softener [OTC]; Enemeez Kids Mini Enema [OTC]; Enemeez Mini [OTC]; FT Stool Softener [OTC]; GoodSense Stool Softener [OTC]; Healthy Mama Move It Along [OTC]; Kao-Tin [OTC] [DSC]; KS Stool Softener [OTC] [DSC]; Laxa Basic [OTC] [DSC]; OneLAX Docusate Sodium [OTC]; Pedia-Lax [OTC]; Promolaxin [OTC] [DSC]; Silace [OTC] [DSC]; Stool Softener [OTC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat constipation.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take 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.
- If you are taking mineral oil.

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 for more than 1 week unless told to do so by your doctor.
- If you have rectal bleeding or you do not have a bowel movement after using this drug, talk with your doctor.
- Do not use other laxatives or stool softeners unless told to do so by the doctor.
- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.
- 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:

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.

Rectal enema:

- Rectal irritation.

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 oral products:

- Stomach cramps.
- Diarrhea.

Liquid:

- Throat irritation.

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.

All oral products:

- Take with or without food.
- Take with a full glass of water.

Liquid:

- Mix liquid with milk, juice, or formula as you have been told to prevent throat irritation or cover the bitter taste.
- 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.
- Some of these drugs need to be shaken before use. Be sure you know if this product needs to be shaken before using it.

Rectal enema:

- This drug is for rectal use only. Do not take this drug by mouth.
- Take off cap.
- Put a lubricant on the enema tip and on the anus before using this drug.
- Put enema tip into the rectum with gentle pressure. Do not force.
- Squeeze the bottle until almost all the liquid is gone.
- If the tip of the tube or this drug will not go into the rectum, do not force it. Call the doctor.

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. Do not freeze.
- 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 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2023-09-28

Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Docusate - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center