MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Etanercept

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

Enbrel; Enbrel Mini; Enbrel SureClick

Brand Names: Canada

Brenzys; Enbrel; Erelzi

Warning

- Severe infections have happened in patients who take this drug. Some of these have led to treatment in a hospital or death. Most people who had these infections were taking other drugs to lower the immune system like methotrexate or steroid drugs. If your child has any infection, is taking antibiotics now or in the recent past, or has had many infections, talk with your child’s doctor.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started on etanercept. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never got the infection. The doctor may test to see if your child has been exposed to TB before starting this drug. Your child may also be tested for TB while taking this drug.
- Lymphoma and other cancers have happened in people who take this drug or drugs like it. This has been deadly in some cases. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat some types of arthritis.
- It is used to treat plaque psoriasis.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

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 has granulomatosis with polyangiitis.
- If your child has a blood infection or other severe infection.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Abatacept or anakinra.
- If your child is taking cyclophosphamide.
- If your child is using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your child's doctor or pharmacist.

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 your child’s blood work checked often. Talk with your child’s doctor.
- Your child may have more chance of getting infections. Have your child wash hands often. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of very bad infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- Make sure your child is up to date with all vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Be sure your child does not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while using this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with the doctor. This drug may lower blood sugar. High blood sugar drugs may need to be changed.
- There is a chance of skin cancer. Have your child avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects your child from the sun.
- Have your child’s skin checked. Tell your child’s doctor if your child has any skin changes like a new wart, skin sore or reddish bump that bleeds or does not heal, or a change in the color or size of a mole.
- Rarely, bone marrow and blood problems have happened with this drug. This includes a severe health problem called aplastic anemia. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has any signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; purple “splotches” on the skin; or feeling very tired or weak.
- If your child has had hepatitis B before or carries the virus, talk with your child’s doctor. Drugs like this one can cause the virus to become active. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems.
- Hepatitis B testing needs to be done as you were told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- If your child has a latex allergy, talk with the doctor. Some products have latex.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.
- 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.

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.
- If your child used this drug while pregnant, tell the baby's doctor.

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 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 lupus like a rash on the cheeks or other body parts, sunburn

easy, muscle or joint pain, chest pain or shortness of breath, or swelling in the arms or legs.

- Feeling confused.
- Pale skin.
- Red scaly patches or bumps that are pus filled.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.
- Severe and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has 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.
- Rarely, people using drugs like this one have had nervous system problems. Sometimes, these problems have not gone away. Call the doctor right away if your child has a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal; change in eyesight; dizziness; seizures; or weakness in the arms or legs.
- Heart failure has happened with this drug, as well as heart failure that has gotten worse in people who already have it. Tell the doctor if your child has heart disease. Call the doctor right away if your child has shortness of breath, a big weight gain, a heartbeat that is not normal, or swelling in the arms or legs that is new or worse.

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:

- Irritation where the shot is given.
- Diarrhea.
- Headache.

- Signs of a common cold.

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:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving your child the shot, your child’s doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not shake.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Different brands of this drug may be clear or have a slight color. Be sure you know what your brand needs to look like when ready to use. Do not use if the solution changes color. If you are not sure, talk with the pharmacist.
- 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.

Auto-injectors, prefilled pens, and prefilled syringes:

- You may need to leave this drug at room temperature for 30 minutes before using. Do not remove the cap or cover until ready to use. Do not heat this drug. If you are not sure if the brand you have needs to be left at room temperature before using, talk with your pharmacist or read the package insert.
- This product may contain small white particles. Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has large lumps, flakes, or other particles.

Auto-injectors and prefilled pens:

- Check the window on the auto-injector when the injection is done. If the window does not show that the dose has been given or if it looks like this drug is still injecting, call the doctor right away to find out what to do.

Single-use vial:

- To make the injection feel better, take this drug out of the refrigerator and allow it to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before use. Do not remove the cap or cover. Do not heat this drug.
- This product may contain small white particles. Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has large lumps, flakes, or other particles.

Multi-dose container:

- This drug needs to be mixed before use. Follow how to mix as you were told by the doctor.
- To make the injection feel better, take this drug out of the refrigerator and allow it to sit at room temperature for up to 30 minutes before use. Do not remove the cap or cover. Do not heat this drug.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.

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.
- If you are not sure what to do if your child misses a dose, call the doctor.

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

Auto-injectors, prefilled pens, and prefilled syringes:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature. The amount of time you may store at room temperature depends on the product you are using. Read the patient information leaflets found in the product package to see how long you may store the product at room temperature.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Auto-injector shot:

- If using the AutoTouch reusable autoinjector, do not refrigerate the autoinjector.

Single-use vial:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 30 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 30 days, throw this drug away.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Multi-dose container:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature. The amount of time you may store at room temperature depends on the product you are using. Read the patient information leaflets found in the product package to see how long you may store the product at room temperature.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.
- Use right away after mixing or you may store in a refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

All products:

- Store in the original container to protect from light.
- Protect from very hot or very cold temperatures.
- 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2022-12-06

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.

Etanercept - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center