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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Ethinyl Estradiol and Desogestrel

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

Apri; Azurette; Bekyree; Caziant; Cyclessa [DSC]; Cyred; Cyred EQ; Desogen [DSC]; Emoquette; Enskyce; Isibloom; Juleber; Kalliga; Kariva; Kimidess [DSC]; Mircette; Pimtrea; Reclipsen; Simliya; Velivet; Viorele

## Brand Names: Canada

Apri 21; Apri 28; Freya 21; Freya 28; Linessa 21; Linessa 28; Marvelon; Mirvala 21; Mirvala 28; Reclipsen 21 [DSC]; Reclipsen 28 [DSC]

## Warning

- Smoking cigarettes while using this drug raises the chance of very bad heart and blood-related side effects. This chance is raised with age (mainly in women older than 35 years of age). It is also raised with the number of cigarettes smoked. It is strongly advised not to smoke.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent pregnancy.
- 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 had any of these health problems: Blood clots, blood clotting problem, breast cancer or other cancer where hormones make it grow, diseased blood vessels in the brain or heart, disease of a heart valve with problems, endometrial cancer, cancer of the cervix or vagina, heart disease, chest pain caused by angina, heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, liver disease, liver tumor, very bad headache or migraine, diabetes that affects blood flow, or vaginal bleeding where the cause is not known.
- If your child has surgery and needs bedrest.
- If your child has turned yellow during pregnancy or with estrogen-based or hormone contraceptive use.
- If your child is taking ombitasvir, paritaprevir, and ritonavir (with or without dasabuvir).

### **If your child is pregnant:**

- Do not give this drug to your child if she is pregnant.

### **If your child is breast-feeding a baby:**

- Talk with the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby.

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 for your child to take this drug with all of his/her 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. This drug may need to be stopped before certain types of surgery as the doctor has told you. If this drug is stopped, the doctor will tell you when to start giving this drug again after your child's surgery or procedure.

- This drug may raise the chance of blood clots, a stroke, or a heart attack. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with the doctor if your child will need to be still for long periods of time like long trips, bedrest after surgery, or illness. Not moving for long periods may raise the chance of blood clots.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with the doctor. This drug can raise blood sugar.
- Have your child's blood sugar checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- High blood pressure has happened with drugs like this one. Have your child's blood pressure checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Be sure your child has regular breast exams and gynecology check-ups. Your child will also need to do breast self-exams as the doctor has told you.
- If your child drinks grapefruit juice or eats grapefruit often, talk with your child's doctor.
- 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.
- Certain drugs, herbal products, or health problems could cause this drug to not work as well. Be sure the doctor knows about all of your child's drugs and health problems.
- If your child is allergic to tartrazine, talk with your child's doctor. Some products have tartrazine.
- Do not use in children who have not had their first menstrual period.

**If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through having sex. Be sure your child does not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom.
- If your child has any signs of pregnancy or if she has a positive pregnancy test, call the doctor right away.

## 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 liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of gallbladder problems like pain in the upper right belly area, right shoulder area, or between the shoulder blades; yellow skin or eyes; fever with chills; bloating; or very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Low mood (depression).
- Mood changes.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Swelling.
- Bulging eyes.
- Change in how contact lenses feel in the eyes.
- Change in eyesight.
- Loss of eyesight.
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.

- A lump in the breast, breast pain or soreness, or nipple discharge.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Spotting or vaginal bleeding that is very bad or does not go away.
- Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.

## **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:

- Feeling more or less hungry.
- Dizziness.
- Weight gain or loss.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain or cramps.
- Bloating.
- Period (menstrual) changes. These include spotting or bleeding between cycles.
- Enlarged breasts.
- Tender breasts.
- Hair loss.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- This drug may cause dark patches of skin on your child's face. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects him/her from the sun.

**If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- Lowered interest in sex.

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.

- Give this drug at the same time of day.
- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- If your child also takes colesevelam, give it at least 4 hours before or after your child takes this drug.
- Do not skip doses, even if your child does not have sex or does not have sex very often.
- If your child throws up or has diarrhea, this drug may not work as well. Your child needs to use an extra form of birth control, like condoms, until you check with the doctor.
- If your child misses 2 periods in a row, have your child take a pregnancy test before starting a new dosing cycle.

## **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- If a dose is missed, check the package insert or call the doctor to find out what to do. If using this drug to prevent pregnancy, another form of birth control may need to be used for some time to prevent pregnancy.

## **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 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 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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