Isoflurane

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
Forane; Terrell

**What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to put you to sleep for surgery.
- It is used to cause sleep during a procedure.

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

- If you have an allergy to isoflurane or any other part of 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 or a family member have had muscle problems or a certain health problem called malignant hyperthermia. Signs
of malignant hyperthermia include a very high fever, a fast heartbeat, muscle stiffness, and trouble breathing.

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.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until the effects of this drug wear off and you feel fully awake.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol or use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- This drug may cause a change in thinking clearly and with logic for 2 to 3 days after getting it. Small mood changes may also last for up to 6 days after getting this drug. Talk with the doctor.
High potassium levels have rarely happened with inhaled anesthesia drugs. This has led to abnormal heartbeats and death in some children after surgery. The chance may be raised in people with certain muscle problems. Talk with the doctor.

Studies in young animals and children have shown that frequent or long-term use of anesthesia drugs or drugs used for sleep in children younger than 3 years of age may lead to long-term brain problems. This may also happen in unborn babies if the mother uses this drug during the third trimester of pregnancy. Talk with the doctor.

Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.

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

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your 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:

- 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 high potassium levels like a heartbeat that does not feel normal; feeling confused; feeling weak, lightheaded, or dizzy; feeling like passing out; numbness or tingling; or shortness of breath.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.

- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.

- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.

- Muscle stiffness.

- Change in color of skin to a bluish color like on the lips, nail beds, fingers, or toes.

- This drug may cause a very bad and sometimes deadly problem called malignant hyperthermia. Call your doctor right away if you have a fast heartbeat, fast breathing, fever, or spasm or stiffness of the jaw muscles.

- Very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have 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.

**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:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Shivering.

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](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.

- It is given as a liquid for breathing into the lungs by a doctor.
- Other drugs may be given before this drug to help avoid side
effects.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- This drug is given on an as needed basis.

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

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

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 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.
- 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.
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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 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.

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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 to search our virtual library.

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