



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Levetiracetam

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

Keppra; Keppra XR; Roweepra; Roweepra XR; Spritam [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

Abbott-Levetiracetam [DSC]; ACT Levetiracetam; APO-Levetiracetam; Auro-Levetiracetam; BIO-Levetiracetam; DOM-Levetiracetam; JAMP-Levetiracetam; Keppra; NAT-Levetiracetam; PHL-Levetiracetam [DSC]; PMS-Levetiracetam; Priva-Levetiracetam; PRO-Levetiracetam-250; PRO-Levetiracetam-500; PRO-Levetiracetam-750; RAN-Levetiracetam; RIVA-Levetiracetam; SANDOZ Levetiracetam; VAN-Levetiracetam

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat seizures.
- 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 has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child has kidney disease or is on dialysis.

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?

All products:

- 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 avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child other drugs and natural products that may slow your child's actions.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not stop giving this drug to your child all of a sudden without calling the doctor. Your child may have a greater risk of seizures. If your child needs to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as told by the doctor.
- This drug may cause behavior changes and mental or mood problems. Talk with the doctor.
- A very bad reaction called angioedema has happened with this drug.

Sometimes, this may be life-threatening. Signs may include swelling of the hands, face, lips, eyes, tongue, or throat; trouble breathing; trouble swallowing; or unusual hoarseness. Get medical help right away if your child has any of these signs.

- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.
- Children younger than 4 years old will need to have their blood pressure checked often. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.
- This drug may not work as well during pregnancy. Talk with the doctor.

Extended-release tablets:

- You may see something that looks like the tablet in your child's stool. This is normal and not a cause for concern. If you have questions, talk with your child'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.
- If seizures are worse or not the same after starting this drug.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Change in balance.

- Trouble walking.
- Feeling very sleepy.
- Very bad headache.
- Patients who take this drug may be at a greater risk of having thoughts or actions of suicide. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. Call the doctor right away if signs like low mood (depression), nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.
- A very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause very bad health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or if your child feels very tired or weak.

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:

- Diarrhea.
- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Stuffy nose.
- Nose and throat irritation.
- Belly pain.
- Trouble sleeping.

- Not hungry.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Headache.
- Flu-like signs.

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 oral products:

- Give this drug with or without food.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.
- Give this drug at the same time of day.

Oral-disintegrating tablet/tablet for oral suspension:

- Do not let your child swallow it whole.
- Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Do not give your child chipped or broken tablets.
- Do not push the tablet out of the foil when opening. Use dry hands to take it from the foil. Place on your child's tongue and have your child follow with a sip of liquid before swallowing. Have your child swallow the tablet only after it dissolves.
- Whole tablet(s) may also be mixed in a cup with a small amount of liquid like

1 tablespoon (15 mL) or enough to cover the drug. Let the tablet(s) dissolve all the way and have your child drink the mixture right away. If any drug is left in the cup, rinse cup with a small amount of liquid, swirl, and have your child drink.

Liquid:

- 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.

All tablet products:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew or crush.

Regular-release tablets:

- You may break the tablet in half. Do not let your child chew or crush.

Extended-release tablets:

- Do not split or break tablet.
- Check your child's drug when you get a new prescription to make sure you have the right drug. Call the doctor right away if you think you were given the wrong drug or if you are not sure what your child's drug should look like.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

All oral products:

- 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.

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

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

All oral products:

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

Injection:

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

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.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.

- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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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