Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Alfacalcidol

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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: Canada

One-Alpha; SANDOZ Alfacalcidol

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent low calcium levels.
- It is used to treat high parathyroid hormone levels in certain patients.
- It is used to treat some bone problems in patients who have kidneys that do not work well.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

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: High calcium levels, high phosphate levels, or high vitamin D levels.
- If you are taking other sources of vitamin D, talk with your doctor.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. You will need to talk with your doctor about if this drug is right for you.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

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.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor. You may also need to have an eye exam or other exams.
- Follow the diet plan that your doctor told you about.
- Do not take antacids that have magnesium with this drug.
- Too much vitamin D in the body may cause problems. Do not take more of this drug than what your doctor told you to take. Be sure you know the signs of too much vitamin D in the body. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

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 calcium levels like weakness, confusion, feeling tired,

headache, upset stomach and throwing up, constipation, or bone pain.

- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Back pain, belly pain, groin pain, or blood in the urine. May be signs of a kidney stone.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Weight loss.
- Decreased appetite.
- Metallic taste.
- Bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Passing urine more often, especially at night.
- Unusual thirst.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- Eye is bothered by bright light.

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:

- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Weakness.

- Feeling dizzy or sleepy.

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 this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If you also take cholestyramine or mineral oil, take this drug at least 1 hour before or 4 to 6 hours after the cholestyramine or mineral oil.

Capsules:

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, open, or crush.

Liquid (drops):

- Use the dropper that comes with this drug to measure the drug.
- Do not shake.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a vein.

What do I do if I miss a dose?
All oral products:

- 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.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

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

Liquid (drops):

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.
- After opening, throw away any part not used after 4 months.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your 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 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

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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