Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Alteplase

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: US

Activase; Cathflo Activase

Brand Names: Canada

Activase RT-PA; Alteplase RT-PA; Cathflo

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to clear blood clots out of catheters.
- It is used to treat blood clots that have caused certain health problems like some types of heart attacks or strokes.
- 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?

For all uses 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.

For all uses of this drug other than in a catheter:

- If you have any of these health problems: Active bleeding, including bleeding in the brain; risk of easy bruising or bleeding; blood vessel problems like aneurysm or arteriovenous malformations; brain tumor; or

high blood pressure.

- If you have had any of these health problems: Stroke; injury to the head, brain, or spine; or surgery on the brain or spine.

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?

For all uses of this drug:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

For all uses of this drug other than in a catheter:

- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor. Rarely, some bleeding problems have been deadly.
- Use care to prevent injury and avoid falls or crashes.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- People with certain heart problems who use this drug to treat a blood clot in the lung may have a raised chance of another blood clot. If you have

questions about whether you may have a raised chance of another blood clot, talk with your doctor.

- If you are 75 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

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:

For all uses of this drug:

- 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Very bad headache.
- Severe stomach pain.

For use in a catheter:

- Redness, swelling, or pain at the catheter site.
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm.

For all uses of this drug other than in a catheter:

- Rarely, a health problem called cholesterol embolism has happened with drugs like this one. This problem has also happened with some blood vessel procedures. Sometimes, this can be deadly. Call your doctor right away if you have a change in color of the skin to bluish, black, or purple. Call your doctor right away if you have a change in how much urine is passed; severe headache or dizziness; passing out; chest pain or pressure; change in eyesight; muscle pain or dark urine; or severe stomach pain, back pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.

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 you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

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.

For use in a catheter:

- It is given into the catheter.

For all uses of this drug other than in a catheter:

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

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- This drug will be given on an as needed basis in a health care setting.

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.
- 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 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.

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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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