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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Ascorbic Acid

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

Acerola C 500 [OTC]; Ascor; BProtected Vitamin C [OTC]; Fruit C 500 [OTC]; Fruit C [OTC]; Fruity C [OTC]; True Vitamin C [OTC]; Vita-C [OTC]; VitaChew Vit C Citrus Burst [OTC]; Well Vitamin C [OTC]

## Brand Names: Canada

Ascor L 500

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent vitamin C deficiency.
- It is used to treat scurvy.
- 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.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor.
- If you are on a low-salt or salt-free diet, talk with your doctor.
- Kidney stones or other very bad kidney problems have rarely happened in people taking high doses of this drug for a long time. The risk may be higher in people who have had kidney problems or kidney stones. The risk may also be higher in people 65 or older and children younger than 2 years of age.
- Do not take this drug for longer than you were told by your doctor.
- Be careful if you have low levels of an enzyme called G6PD. Anemia may happen. Low levels of G6PD may be more likely in patients of African, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean descent.
- 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.

## **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 kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Dark urine or yellow skin or eyes.
- Back pain, belly pain, or blood in the urine. May be signs of a kidney stone.

## **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:

### **All oral products:**

- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.

### **Injection:**

- Irritation where the shot is given.

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:**

- It is best if this drug is taken with a meal.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **Long-acting products:**

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

### **Lozenge:**

- Suck oral lozenge. Do not chew, break, or crush it. Do not swallow it whole.

### **Chewable tablets:**

- Chew well before swallowing.

### **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.

### **Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into a muscle, vein, or into the fatty part of the skin.
- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time after being added to fluids.

## **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?**

### **All oral products:**

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

### **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 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

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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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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