Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Barium

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

E-Z-Disk; E-Z-HD; E-Z-Paque; E-Z-Paste [DSC]; Liquid E-Z-Paque; Liquid Polibar Plus [DSC]; NeuLumEX [DSC]; Readi-Cat 2; Tagitol V; Vanilla SilQ; Varibar Honey; Varibar Nectar; Varibar Pudding; Varibar Thin Honey; Varibar Thin Liquid

What is this drug used for?

- It is used before an x-ray or other test like it.

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

All products:

- 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 had any of these health problems: Blockage, hole, bleeding, injury, burn, or blood flow problems in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract; slow-moving GI (gastrointestinal) tract; or a problem called toxic megacolon.
- If you have had a recent hole in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract, GI surgery, or radiation to the pelvic area.

All oral products:

- If you have trouble swallowing or have inhaled food, liquids, saliva, or vomit into your lungs.
- If you have a hole between your esophagus and trachea (the swallowing and breathing tubes).

Liquid (suspension):

- If you are not able to break down fructose.

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?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug prevents many other drugs from getting into the body. If you take other drugs, check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if you need to take them at some other time than this drug.
- To prevent constipation or bowel block from this drug, your doctor may have you use a laxative like milk of magnesia or lactulose after using this drug. Follow what your doctor has told you.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids after using this drug unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.
- Rarely, this drug may leak into the blood vessels from the GI (gastrointestinal) tract. Side effects have included blood clots and very low

blood pressure. Sometimes, this can be deadly. If you have questions, 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, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

Capsules:

- You may need to avoid using laxatives, enemas, or suppositories for some time before using this drug. Follow what your doctor has told you.

Liquid (suspension):

- Some products have sorbitol in them. Very bad health problems like low blood sugar, bleeding, and kidney failure have happened when people who are not able to break down fructose took a product with sorbitol in it. Talk with the 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been life-threatening.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Severe constipation or stomach pain. These may be signs of a severe bowel problem.

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.
- Stomach cramps.

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.

Tablets:

- Swallow whole with 1 or 2 swallows of water. Do not chew, break, or crush.

Capsules:

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- If you cannot swallow this drug whole, you may sprinkle the contents on applesauce. If you do this, swallow the mixture right away. Do not store the mixture for future use.

Liquid (suspension):

- Shake well before use.
- Most of the time, this drug is taken by mouth. Take as you have been told by your doctor.
- Be sure you know how to take this drug with regard to food. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you spill any of this drug while shaking it or drinking it, call your doctor to see if your procedure may need to be rescheduled.
- Some products may be used as an enema. If you are using this drug as an enema, it will be given rectally by your doctor.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

- Most of the time, this drug will be given in a hospital or doctor's office. If stored at home, follow how to store as you were told by the doctor.
- 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 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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