PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Colchicine and Probenecid

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.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat long-term gouty arthritis.

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

For all patients taking 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: Blood problems or kidney stones.
- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are taking a salicylate drug like aspirin.
- If you have liver or kidney problems and you take certain other drugs. Very bad and sometimes deadly side effects have happened in these people. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

Children:

- If the patient is a child younger than 2 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 2 years of age.

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.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- You may have more gout attacks after you first start taking this drug. Do not stop taking this drug. You may be given other drugs to keep you from having these gout attacks. Talk with your doctor.
- This drug may lower the ability of the bone marrow to make blood cells that the body needs. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Deaths from overdoses have happened with a part of this drug (colchicine) in adults and children. Keep away from children. Do not take more than you were told. If you take too much of this drug or if it is taken by accident, call your poison control center or get medical care right away.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Be sure your doctor and lab workers know you use this drug.

- Sperm problems have happened while taking this drug. Rarely, this may affect being able to father a child. This may go back to normal after the drug is stopped. 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 breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your 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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- 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.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Back pain, belly pain, groin pain, or blood in the urine. May be signs of a kidney stone.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Pale skin.
- Very bad muscle problems have happened with this drug. This can also lead to kidney problems. Tell your doctor if you have muscle pain or weakness,

especially if you feel very tired or weak or have a fever. Tell your doctor if you are not able to pass urine or you have a change in how much urine is passed.

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:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Flushing.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Hair loss.
- Sore gums.

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.

- Take with or without food.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.
- Follow the diet plan that your doctor told you about.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- 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.

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

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

Last Reviewed Date

2023-07-20

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Colchicine and Probenecid - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center