Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cyanocobalamin

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

Dodex [DSC]; Nascobal; Physicians EZ Use B-12; True Vitamin B12 [OTC]; Vitamin Deficiency System-B12

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to help with some kinds of anemia.
- It is used to treat or prevent low vitamin B_{12}.
- 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?

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 an eye problem called Leber's optic atrophy.

Nose spray:

- If you have any of these health problems: Nasal allergies, stuffy nose, or signs of a common cold.

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.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- 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.

Injection:

- Very bad and sometimes deadly allergic reactions have rarely happened. Talk with your doctor.
- This drug may contain aluminum. There is a chance of aluminum toxicity if you are on this drug for a long time. The risk is greater if you have kidney problems. The risk is also higher in premature infants. Talk with the doctor.
- Some products have benzyl alcohol. If possible, avoid products with benzyl alcohol in newborns or infants. Serious side effects can happen in these children with some doses of benzyl alcohol, including if given with other drugs that have benzyl alcohol. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.

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 low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Chest pain.
- Feeling cold in the arms or legs.
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Change in balance.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Change in eyesight.

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 products:

- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Headache.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.

- Joint pain.
- Signs of a common cold.

Nose spray:

- Nose or throat irritation.

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.

Chewable tablets:

- Chew well before swallowing.

Extended-release tablets:

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

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Place under tongue and let dissolve all the way. Do not chew, suck or swallow tablet.

Under the tongue (sublingual) spray:

- Shake well before use.
- Spray into the mouth under the tongue.

Oral liquid:

- Shake well before use.
- 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.

Lozenge and oral-disintegrating tablet:

- Let dissolve in your mouth. Water is not needed.

Nose spray:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use in your nose only. Keep out of your mouth and eyes (may burn).
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Some products need to be primed before first use, or if they are not used for a period of time. Some products do not need to be primed. Check with the doctor or pharmacist to see if your product needs to be primed.
- Blow your nose before use.
- Do not use for at least 1 hour before or 1 hour after eating or drinking hot foods or liquids.
- If you use other drugs in your nose, talk to your doctor about the best order and when to take your drugs.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle or into the fatty part of the skin.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

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?

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All other products:

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Nose spray:

- Protect from heat and light.
- Store upright with the cap on.

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,

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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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