PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Deferasirox

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

Exjade; Jadenu; Jadenu Sprinkle

## Brand Names: Canada

APO-Deferasirox; AURO-Deferasirox (Type J); Exjade; Jadenu; JAMP-Deferasirox (Type J); PMS-Deferasirox; PMS-Deferasirox (TYPE J); SANDOZ Deferasirox; Sandoz Deferasirox (Type J); TARO-Deferasirox; TARO-Deferasirox (Type J)

## Warning

- This drug may cause kidney problems. Some people have needed dialysis. Sometimes, these kidney problems have been deadly. The risk of kidney problems may be higher if you already have kidney problems or other health problems. You will need to have your kidney function checked as you have been told by your doctor. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- If you are dehydrated or are taking any drugs that can raise the chance of kidney problems, talk with your doctor. There are many drugs that can raise the chance of kidney problems. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- This drug may cause liver problems. Sometimes, this has been deadly. The risk of liver problems may be higher if you are older than 55 years or if you already have liver problems or other health problems. You will need to have your liver function checked as you have been told by your doctor. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- If you have kidney or liver problems, talk with your doctor. This drug may need to be avoided or the dose may need to be changed with certain types of kidney or liver problems.
- This drug may raise the chance of severe and sometimes deadly stomach or bowel problems like ulcers or bleeding. The risk is greater in older people, and in people who have had stomach or bowel ulcers or bleeding before. These problems may occur without warning signs.

# What is this drug used for?

- It is used to get rid of iron when too much is in the body.

## 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.
- If you have any of these health problems: Cancer, certain blood or bone marrow problems (low platelets, high-risk myelodysplastic syndrome/MDS), kidney disease, or liver disease.
- If you have not been able to eat or drink like normal, you have diarrhea, you are throwing up, or you get another illness that can cause dehydration.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Cholestyramine, colesevelam, colestipol, phenobarbital, phenytoin, rifampicin, ritonavir, theophylline, or tizanidine.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

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.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked, eye exams, and hearing

tests as you have been told by your doctor.

- Do not take antacids that have aluminum in them with this drug.
- If you are 55 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.
- Birth control pills and other hormone-based birth control may not work as well to prevent pregnancy. Use some other kind of birth control also like a condom when taking this drug.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

## 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.
- 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 bowel problems like black, tarry, or bloody stools; fever; mucus in

the stools; throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds; or very bad stomach pain, constipation, or diarrhea.

- Change in hearing.
- Hearing loss.
- Change in eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or passing out.
- Flu-like signs.
- Rashes may happen with this drug. This drug may need to be stopped for some types of rashes. If you get a rash while taking this drug, call your doctor right away to find out what to do.
- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and other serious reactions. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in your mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever; chills; body aches; shortness of breath; or swollen glands.
- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make blood cells that your body needs. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly bleeding problems or infections. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, a wound that will not heal; any bruising or bleeding; or if you feel very tired or weak.

## 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:

- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.

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 for suspension:

- Take on an empty stomach. Take 30 minutes before a meal.
- Mix the tablet with fruit juice (orange, apple) or water until dissolved and drink right away. Do not chew or swallow it whole.
- After drinking, rinse the rest of the drug in the glass with more juice or water and drink.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### Tablets:

- Take on an empty stomach or with a light meal.
- Take this drug by mouth with water or other liquid.
- If you cannot swallow tablets, the tablet may be crushed and added to a small amount of soft food. Take the mixture right away. Do not store for future use.
- The 90 mg tablet must not be crushed using certain types of tablet crushers. If you will be crushing the 90 mg tablet, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### Granules:

- Take on an empty stomach or with a light meal.
- Sprinkle the granules onto a small amount of soft food like yogurt or applesauce.
- Swallow the mixture right away. Do not store for use at a later time.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

## 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 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.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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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