



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Deferiprone

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

Ferriprox; Ferriprox Twice-A-Day

Brand Names: Canada

Ferriprox; Ferriprox MR; TARO-Deferiprone

Warning

- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make white blood cells. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly infections. You will need to have your blood work checked before and while taking this drug.
- Call your doctor right away if you have any signs of infection like fever, chills, flu-like signs, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or a wound that will not heal. You will need to have a blood test within 24 hours. Be sure you know what to do if you have signs of infection and are not able to reach your doctor right away.

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 ever had a low white blood cell count during past use of this drug or another drug like this one.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Diclofenac, probenecid, or silymarin (milk thistle).
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

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.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- You may need to avoid drinking alcohol with some products. Talk with your

doctor or pharmacist to see if you need to avoid drinking alcohol with this drug.

- You may need to take zinc while you take this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Do not take antacids, foods, multivitamins, or other products that have aluminum, iron, or zinc within 4 hours before or 4 hours after this drug.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. A pregnancy test will be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant.
- If you may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug and for 6 months after your last dose. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- If your sex partner may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug and for 3 months after your last dose. If your partner gets pregnant, call the doctor right away.

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.
- Purple spots or redness of the skin.
- Swelling around the eyes.

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:

For all patients taking this drug:

- Joint pain.
- Stomach pain.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- This drug may change the urine to a reddish brown color. This is normal and not harmful.

People with sickle cell disease or other anemias:

- Diarrhea.
- Fever.
- Nose irritation.
- Mouth or throat pain or irritation.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Bone pain.
- Pain in arms or legs.
- Back pain.
- Headache.
- Cough.

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 products:

- Taking this drug with meals may help with upset stomach.

Tablets:

- If you have trouble swallowing, talk with your doctor.

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.
- After taking your dose, rinse the measuring device with water and drink.

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?

Tablets:

- Store tablets in the original container at room temperature. Keep the cap tightly closed.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Liquid:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.
- After opening, throw away any part not used after 35 days.

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.
- 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>.

Last Reviewed Date

2025-05-30

Copyright

© 2025 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.

Deferiprone - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center