Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Furosemide

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

Furoscix; Furoscix ReadyFlow; Lasix; Lasix ONYU

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Furosemide; Furosemide Special; Lasix Oral; Lasix Special; MINT-Furosemide; PRO-Furosemide; TEVA-Furosemide

Warning

- This drug is a strong fluid-lowering drug (diuretic). Sometimes too much water and electrolytes (like potassium) in the blood may be lost. This can lead to severe health problems. Your doctor will follow you closely to change the dose to match your body's needs.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to get rid of extra fluid.
- It is used to treat high blood pressure.

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 are not able to pass urine.
- If you are dehydrated or have electrolyte problems.
- If you have any of these health problems: Liver problems or low blood pressure.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Chloral hydrate, ethacrynic acid, or lithium.

Infusor:

- If you have an allergy to adhesive.
- If the patient is a child who weighs less than 95 lbs (43 kg).

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.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- If you are on a low-salt or salt-free diet, talk with your doctor.
- If you are taking this drug and have high blood pressure, talk with your doctor before using OTC products that may raise blood pressure. These include cough or cold drugs, diet pills, stimulants, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen, and some natural products or aids.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Check your blood pressure as you have been told.
- High cholesterol and triglyceride levels have happened with this drug. If you have high cholesterol or triglycerides, talk with your doctor.
- You may need extra potassium. Talk with your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you use alcohol, marijuana or other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- This drug may make you sunburn more easily. Use care if you will be in the sun. Tell your doctor if you sunburn easily while taking this drug.
- Watch for gout attacks.
- If you have lupus, this drug can make your lupus active or get worse. Tell your doctor right away if you get any new or worse signs.
- 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.

Infusor:

- If you will be having an MRI or will be around an MRI machine, talk with your 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.
- Signs of fluid and electrolyte problems like mood changes, confusion, muscle pain or weakness, fast or abnormal heartbeat, severe dizziness or passing out, increased thirst, seizures, feeling very tired or weak, decreased appetite, unable to pass urine or change in the amount of urine produced, dry mouth, dry eyes, or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- 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.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.

- Blurred eyesight.
- Restlessness.
- Hearing problems like decreased hearing and loss of hearing have happened with this drug. Sometimes this may go away but sometimes it may not. Call your doctor right away if you have ringing in the ears, any change in your hearing, or a feeling of fullness in your ears.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or if you feel very tired or weak.
- 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.

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:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Stomach cramps.

Infusor:

- Swelling, warmth, or redness where this drug was given.
- Bruising, soreness, or short-term pain where this drug was given.

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:

- This drug may cause you to pass urine more often. To keep from having sleep problems, try not to take too close to bedtime.
- Do not take sucralfate within 2 hours before or after taking this drug.
- Do not take if product changes color.

Liquid (solution):

- 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.

Injection (I.M., I.V.):

- It is given as an injection into a muscle or vein.

Auto-injectors:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin in the belly area.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- This drug takes about 10 seconds to inject. Be sure you know how to tell if the full dose is given. Be sure you know what to do if you do not get the full dose.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Each auto-injector is for 1 use only.
- 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.

Infusor:

- It is given into the fatty part of the skin on the belly area between the bottom of the ribcage and the top of the belt line.
- Be sure you know how to use this drug. Read the instructions for use that come with this drug. If there are no instructions for use or you have any questions about how to use this drug, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not use this drug somewhere you will not be able to hear or see the alarm if it goes off.
- This infusion takes about 5 hours. Limit physical activity while getting this

drug. Try to avoid bending while you have this drug on.

- Do not use this drug within 12 inches of a mobile phone, tablet, computer, or wireless device like a TV remote, computer keyboard, or mouse.
- Do not wear this drug in a car or on a plane. If you need to be in a car or on a plane, talk with your doctor.
- This drug will cause you to pass urine more often. Stay near a bathroom for at least 8 hours after starting this drug. To keep from having sleep problems, try not to take too close to bedtime. If you do not pass urine more often, call your doctor.
- If you will be using this drug at home, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to use it.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not open until you are ready to use.
- Do not touch the start button until you have put this device on your skin.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Do not put on skin with a lot of hair. You may clip or shave any hair at the site you will be using.
- Do not put on skin where you have just used creams, oils, lotions, or other skin products.
- Do not put the infusor where a belt, waistband, or other type of clothing may rub against or push it off your skin.
- Move the site where you give this drug as you were told by the doctor.
- Do not use this drug if it has been dropped or if it is broken.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Do not get the device wet. Do not shower, take a bath, swim, or do activities that make you sweat while you wear this drug.

- Do not take the infusor off until the dose has finished. If you have an emergency, if the infusor falls off, or the infusor has an error, follow the directions in the instructions for use. If you are not sure what to do, call your doctor right away.
- Some products have a reusable infusor for use with cartridges that can only be used 1 time. Some products may only be used 1 time. Be sure you know if your device can be reused.
- When throwing away single use devices or parts of a device that cannot be reused, put them in a needle/sharp disposal box. 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.
- Do not use other medicines or other cartridges with the infusor.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

All oral products:

- 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.

Injection, auto-injectors, and Infusor:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

All oral products:

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

Liquid (solution):

- Do not freeze.

Auto-injector and Infusor:

- Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate or freeze.
- Store in the outer carton to protect from light.

Injection:

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

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, 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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