PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Iohexol

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

Omnipaque

Brand Names: Canada

Omnipaque; Omnipaque 240; Omnipaque 300

Warning

- Some products must not be given into the spine. Very bad and sometimes deadly health problems have happened when these products were given into the spine. This includes coma, heart attack, kidney failure, paralysis, seizures, high body temperature, a muscle problem called rhabdomyolysis, or brain problems like bleeding or swelling. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used before a CT scan or other test.

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 dehydrated, have been eating poorly, or have used a laxative or water pill before this drug.
- If you have had a skin reaction to this drug or another drug like it in the past.
- If you are taking metformin.

Injection (if given into the spine):

- If you have an infection.
- If you are taking any drugs that may raise the chance of seizures, or if you have taken one in the last 48 hours. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

Injection (if given in an artery or vein):

- If you are not able to pass urine.

If used before an x-ray of the uterus and fallopian tubes:

- If you are having your menstrual period, you have a genital infection, or you have or may have a growth in the reproductive tract.
- If you have had a type of tissue taken out (curettage) or a type of cervix biopsy (conization) within the past 30 days.
- If you have had a pregnancy ended within the past 6 months.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.

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.
- Your blood work may need to be checked. Talk with your doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Call your doctor right away if you have signs of kidney problems like not able to pass urine; change in how much urine is passed; bloody, brown, or foamy urine; shortness of breath or cough; or puffy or swollen face, feet, or hands.
- If you are 65 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 side effects may be higher in some children.
- 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 (if given in an artery or vein):

- Low thyroid function has happened in children younger than 3 years of age after the use of drugs like this one. Low thyroid function in early life can affect child development. If the patient is a child, your child may need to have thyroid function checked for some time after the injection. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Rarely, life-threatening or deadly heart problems have happened with this

drug. This includes low blood pressure and heart attack. Talk with the doctor.

- Health problems like blood clots have happened with this drug when used with some procedures. Sometimes, blood clots may cause heart attack and stroke, which may be deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

Injection (if given into the spine):

- This drug may raise the chance of seizures in some people, including people who have had seizures in the past. Talk to your doctor to see if you have a greater chance of seizures while taking this drug.

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:

All products:

- 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- Signs of thyroid problems like change in weight; feeling nervous, excitable, restless, or weak; hair thinning; depression; eye or neck swelling; not able to focus; trouble with heat or cold; menstrual changes; shakiness; or sweating.

Injection:

- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.

- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm.
- Seizures.
- Change in eyesight.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.
- Severe skin reactions may happen from 1 hour to several weeks after getting 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.

Injection (if given into the spine):

- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.

Liquid:

- Swelling.

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:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Headache.

Injection (if given in an artery or vein):

- Dizziness.
- Feeling of warmth.
- Change in taste.

Injection (if given into the spine):

- Dizziness.
- Back pain.
- Neck pain.
- Stiff neck.

Liquid:

- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Gas.

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:

- You will need to be sure that you are not dehydrated before getting this drug. Check with your doctor to see if you need to drink extra fluids before getting this drug.

- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids after using this drug unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.

Injection:

- Your doctor will give this drug.
- Other drugs may be given before this drug to help avoid side effects.

Liquid:

- It may be given by mouth or given rectally.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Liquid:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

Injection:

- This drug will be given in a health care setting.

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

Liquid:

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

Injection:

- This injection will be given to you in a health care setting. You will not store it at home.

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.

- 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.
- 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

2024-10-04

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.

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