PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Liothyronine

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

Cytomel; Liomny; Triostat [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

AURO-Liothyronine; Cytomel; TEVA-Liothyronine; ZDS-Liothyronine

Warning

- Do not use this drug for weight loss. Severe and sometimes deadly side effects may happen with this drug if it is taken in large doses or with other drugs for weight loss. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to add thyroid hormone to the body.
- It is used to manage thyroid cancer.
- It is used to test for thyroid problems.
- 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?

- 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: Overactive thyroid gland or weak adrenal gland.

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.
- Do not run out of this drug.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), this drug may sometimes raise blood sugar. Talk with your doctor about how to keep your blood sugar under control.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you take biotin or a product with biotin in it, stop taking biotin at least 2 days before having your thyroid levels checked.
- This drug may cause weak bones (osteoporosis) with doses that are too high. The risk may be higher after menopause. Talk with your doctor to see if you have a higher risk of weak bones or if you have any questions.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- 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:

- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the 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 high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.

- Signs of too much thyroid hormone in the body. This includes feeling bothered by heat; shaky; tired or weak; or nervous, excitable, or irritable. This also includes weight loss; appetite changes; fever; sweating a lot; headache; anxiety; emotional ups and downs; trouble sleeping; muscle weakness or cramps; fast or abnormal heartbeat; chest pain or pressure; shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs; diarrhea; throwing up; stomach cramps; flushing; bone pain; menstrual changes; or fertility problems.

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:

- Hair loss may happen in some people in the first few months of using this drug. This most often goes back to normal.

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:

- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- If you take colesevelam, colestipol, cholestyramine, kayexalate, or sevelamer, do not take it within 4 hours before or 4 hours after you take this drug.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a vein.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Tablets:

- 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:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

Tablets:

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

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

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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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