PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Liraglutide

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

Saxenda; Victoza

Brand Names: Canada

Saxenda; Victoza

Warning

- This drug has been shown to cause thyroid cancer in some animals. It is not known if this happens in humans. If thyroid cancer happens, it may be deadly if not found and treated early. Call your doctor right away if you have a neck mass, trouble breathing, trouble swallowing, or have hoarseness that will not go away.
- Do not use this drug if you have a health problem called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2), or if you or a family member have had a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid cancer (MTC). Talk to your doctor if you are not sure.
- Have your blood work checked and thyroid ultrasounds as you have been told by your doctor.

What is this drug used for?

Victoza:

- It is used to help control blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes.
- It is used to lower the chance of heart attack, stroke, and death in people with type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Saxenda:

- It is used to help with weight loss in certain people.

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 your stomach empties slowly or you have trouble digesting food.
- If you are using another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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?

For all uses of this drug:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- Follow the diet and exercise plan that your doctor told you about.
- If you cannot drink liquids by mouth or if you have upset stomach, throwing up, or diarrhea that does not go away, you need to avoid getting dehydrated. Contact your doctor to find out what to do. Dehydration may lead to low blood pressure or to new or worsening kidney problems.
- This drug may prevent other drugs taken by mouth from getting into the body. If you take other drugs by mouth, you may need to take them at some other time than this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Do not share pen or cartridge devices with another person even if the needle has been changed. Sharing these devices may pass infections from one person to another. This includes infections you may not know you have.

- If you will be having any surgery or procedure, talk with your doctor. This drug may raise the risk of food getting into the lungs during surgery or other procedures that use anesthesia or deep sedation. You may need to stop this drug before these types of surgery or procedures.

If using for high blood sugar:

- Wear disease medical alert ID (identification).
- Do not drive if your blood sugar has been low. There is a greater chance of you having a crash.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- It may be harder to control blood sugar during times of stress such as fever, infection, injury, or surgery. A change in physical activity, exercise, diet, or weight may also affect blood sugar.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

If using for weight loss:

- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. Weight loss during pregnancy may also cause harm to an unborn baby. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been life-threatening.

- Dizziness or passing out.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Depression or other mood changes.
- Slurred speech.
- Blurred eyesight.
- Low blood sugar can happen. The chance may be raised when this drug is used with other drugs for diabetes. Signs may be dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy or weak, shaking, fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these signs. Follow what you have been told to do for low blood sugar. This may include taking glucose tablets, liquid glucose, or some fruit juices.
- Severe and sometimes deadly pancreas problems (pancreatitis) have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have severe stomach pain, severe back pain, or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Kidney problems have happened. Sometimes, these may need to be treated in the hospital or with dialysis. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs of kidney problems like being unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.

- Gallbladder problems have happened while taking this drug. Sometimes, people had to be treated in the hospital. In some cases, the gallbladder had to be removed. Call your doctor right away if you have signs like pain in the upper right belly area, right shoulder area, or between the shoulder blades; yellow skin or eyes; fever with chills; bloating; or very upset stomach or throwing up.

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 uses of this drug:

- Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, and decreased appetite are common with this drug. If these happen, talk with your doctor about ways to lower these side effects. Call your doctor right away if any of these effects bother you, do not get better, or are severe.
- Irritation where the shot is given.
- Headache.

If using for high blood sugar:

- Nose or throat irritation.
- Back pain.

If using for weight loss:

- Stomach pain.
- Feeling tired or weak.

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.

For all uses of this drug:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.

- Do not give into a muscle or vein.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Take with or without food.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Prepare pen before first use as you have been told. You will also need to do this if you drop the pen.
- This product may make a clicking sound as you prepare the dose. Do not prepare the dose by counting the clicks. Doing so could lead to using the wrong dose.
- Remove all pen needle covers before injecting a dose (there may be 2). If you are not sure what type of pen needle you have or how to use it, talk with the doctor.
- Put the cap back on after you are done using your dose.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

- 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.
- Attach new needle before each dose.

If using for high blood sugar:

- If you are also using insulin, you may inject this drug and the insulin in the same area of the body but not right next to each other.
- Do not mix this drug in the same syringe with insulin.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you miss 3 days of this drug, call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

- Store unopened pens in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- Store opened pens at room temperature or in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.

- After opening, throw away any part not used after 30 days.
- Take off the needle after each shot and safely put it in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not store this device with the needle on it.
- Protect from heat and light.
- Keep the cap on the pen when not in use.
- 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.

Victoza:

- Throw away drug if stored at a temperature above 86°F (30°C).

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

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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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