PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Montelukast

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

Singulair

Brand Names: Canada

ACH-Montelukast; AG-Montelukast; APO-Montelukast; Auro-Montelukast; BIO-Montelukast; JAMP-Montelukast; M-Montelukast; Mar-Montelukast; MINT-Montelukast; NAT-Montelukast; NB-Montelukast; NRA-Montelukast; PMS-Montelukast; RIVA-Montelukast FC; SANDOZ Montelukast; Singulair; TARO-Montelukast; TEVA-Montelukast

Warning

For all uses of this drug:

- Severe mental health problems have happened with this drug or after it has been stopped. These problems include depression or suicidal thoughts or actions. These problems can happen in people with and without a history of mental or mood problems. Watch people who take this drug closely. Call the doctor right away if any changes in mood or behavior that are new or worse occur. This includes signs like depression; thoughts or actions of suicide; not able to focus; bad or strange dreams; anxiety; hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there); memory problems; sleep walking; stuttering; shakiness; trouble sleeping; trouble controlling body movements; or feeling agitated, confused, irritable, or restless. Talk with the doctor to be sure that the benefits of this drug are more than the risks.

For allergic reasons:

- This drug must only be used when other drugs cannot be used or have not worked. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise.
- It is used to treat or prevent asthma.
- It is used to ease allergy signs.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

For breathing problems:

- Do not use this drug to treat intense flare-ups of shortness of breath. Use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler). If you have questions, 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.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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.
- If you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.
- 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.

For breathing problems:

- To help control and improve your breathing problem, it is important that you do not run out of this drug. Be sure to get a refill before you run out.
- Call your doctor right away if your breathing problems get worse, if your rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) does not work as well, or if you need to use your rescue inhaler more often.
- If you take this drug for asthma or allergy, do not take another dose to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise.

- If you have asthma and taking aspirin makes it worse, avoid aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and naproxen while you take this drug.
- If you are switching to this drug from a steroid, do not stop taking the steroid all of a sudden. The dose of the steroid may need to be slowly lowered to avoid side effects. 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 a very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Trouble breathing that is new or worse.
- Fever.
- Flu-like signs.
- Sinus pain.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Ear pain.

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:

- Headache.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Signs of a common cold.
- 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:

- Take with or without food.
- Keep taking this drug even when you are not having symptoms.
- If taking this drug to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise, take at least 2 hours before exercise.
- If this drug is for asthma, take in the evening.

Chewable tablets:

- Chew well before swallowing.

Granules:

- Granules may be placed right in the mouth or mixed with cold or room temperature applesauce, baby formula, breast milk, mashed carrots, rice, or ice cream. Do not mix granules in other liquids.
- Do not open the packet until you are ready to take a dose. Take your dose within 15 minutes after opening the packet. Do not store for future use.

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.

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

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

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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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