PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Nalmefene

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

Opvee; Zurnai

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to reverse the effects of some drugs.
- It is used to treat some overdoses.
- 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 take drugs like methadone or buprenorphine to help you stop taking an opioid drug.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If you have opioid use disorder and are given this drug, you may have signs of opioid withdrawal. Some of these signs are sweating, shaking, fever, chills, diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, stomach cramps, goosebumps, body aches, anxiety, feeling irritable, yawning, or fast heartbeat.
- 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.

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.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Shortness of breath.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.

Auto-injectors:

- Feeling more sensitive to 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:

All products:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.

Auto-injectors:

- Ringing in ears.
- Ear discomfort.
- Feeling hot or cold.
- Flushing.
- Dizziness or headache.
- Feeling irritable.

Nose spray:

- Stuffy nose.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Change in taste.
- Decreased appetite.
- Dry mouth.
- Dry eyes.
- Constipation.
- Dizziness or headache.

- Trouble sleeping.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Anxiety.
- Hot flashes.
- Sweating.

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.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Injection (I.V.):

- It is given as a shot into a vein.

All other products:

- Be sure you know the signs of an overdose and when to use this drug. If you are not sure, talk with your doctor.
- Be sure you know how to use before an emergency happens. Read the package insert and instructions for use that come with this drug. If you have any questions about how to use this drug, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.
- Someone else may have to give this drug. Be sure others know where this drug is stored and how to give it if needed.
- Call 911 or get emergency medical care right away after the first dose of this drug.
- After using this drug, overdose symptoms may go away and come back. It is important to get medical help right away after using this drug.

- Each device has only 1 dose and cannot be reused. If another dose is needed, you will need to use a new device.
- Do not take this drug out of the container until you are ready to use it. Do not prime or test this drug before using it.
- If this drug expires, get a refill before a dose is needed.

Nose spray:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use in your nose only. Keep out of your mouth and eyes (may burn).

Auto-injectors:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle or under the skin.
- Jab straight into the outer thigh as you have been told. This drug may be given through clothes if needed. Inject and hold for as long as you were told.
- Check this drug through the viewing window every 30 days. The liquid should be clear and colorless to light yellow. Do not use this drug if the solution changes color, is cloudy, or has particles. Get a new one.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Injection (I.V.):

- This drug will be given on an as needed basis in a health care setting.

Nose spray and auto-injectors:

- Get medical help right away.

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

Nose spray:

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Do not freeze.
- Protect from heat and light.

Auto-injectors:

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

Injection (I.V.):

- This drug will be given in a healthcare setting. You will not store it at home.

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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