Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Parathyroid Hormone

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.

## Warning

- This drug has been shown to raise the chance of bone tumors in lab animals. It is not known if there is a higher chance of bone tumors in humans. This drug is only for use when low blood calcium levels are not controlled with calcium and vitamin D treatment in people with low blood parathyroid hormone levels. This drug is also only for use when the benefits are thought to be greater than the risks.
- Do not take this drug if you have Paget's disease, high levels of alkaline phosphatase in the blood, radiation therapy of the bones, or if your bones have not finished growing.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to control low blood calcium levels in people who have low blood parathyroid hormone levels.

## 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 are taking alendronate.

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.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Take calcium and vitamin D as you were told by your 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.

## 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 calcium levels like weakness, confusion, feeling tired, headache, upset stomach and throwing up, constipation, or bone pain.

- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- A new, tender lump.
- Pain in an area that will not go away.
- A fast heartbeat.
- Severe low blood calcium levels may happen in people who miss a dose or stop this drug all of a sudden. Call your doctor right away if you have any signs of low blood calcium levels like change in thinking; cramping of feet or hands; depression; memory problems; seizures; tingling of your lips, tongue, fingers, or feet; or twitching of face muscles.

## 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:

- Pain in arms or legs.
- Headache.
- Joint pain.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Neck pain.
- Tingling, tickling, or burning feeling of the skin.

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.

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin in the thigh. Switch thighs every day.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- This drug needs to be mixed before use. Follow how to mix as you were told by the doctor.
- Do not shake.
- Do not use if it has been shaken.
- Do not move this drug from the pen to a syringe.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Use a missed dose as soon as you think about it and call your doctor right away. You may need to take more calcium.
- After using a missed dose, go back to your normal time the next day.
- Do not take more than 1 dose of this drug in the same day.

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

- Before mixing, store in the refrigerator.
- Store in the original carton or package until ready to use.
- After mixing, store the cartridge in the provided pen in the refrigerator.
- Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- Protect from heat and light.
- Throw away only the cartridge 14 days after mixing, even if it is not empty. Do not throw away the pen. The pen can be used for up to 2 years if the cartridge is changed as your doctor has told you.
- 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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