PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Penicillamine

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

Cuprimine; Depen Titratabs

## Brand Names: Canada

Cuprimine

### Warning

- Stay under the care of your doctor. Report any side effects right away.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat Wilson's disease.
- It is used to get rid of a protein called cystine from the body.
- It is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.

- 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 had low blood cell counts while taking this drug in the past.
- If you have ever had kidney problems.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Drugs used to treat malaria, gold products, oxyphenbutazone, or phenylbutazone.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. You will need to talk with your doctor about if this drug is right for you.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this 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.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Take vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) as you were told by your doctor.
- Follow the diet plan that your doctor told you about.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Deaths from certain diseases like aplastic anemia, Goodpasture's syndrome, and myasthenia gravis have happened with this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Kidney problems have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these have been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could

have more side effects.

- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- 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.
- If you miss a period or think you may be pregnant, call your doctor right away.

## 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:

### For all patients taking this drug:

- 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 infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color

of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.

- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of lupus like a rash on the cheeks or other body parts, sunburn easy, muscle or joint pain, chest pain or shortness of breath, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Signs of lung or breathing problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough, or fever.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Any skin change.
- Swollen gland.
- Muscle weakness.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Ringing in ears.
- Mood changes.

- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Joint pain.
- Change in eyesight.
- Eyelid droop.

**Cystinuria patients:**

- Back pain, belly pain, groin pain, or blood in the urine. May be signs of a kidney stone.

**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:

- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Change in taste.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

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.

- Take on an empty stomach. Take at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals. Take at least 1 hour before or after any other drug, food, or milk.
- If you are taking certain other drugs, this drug may need to be taken at a different time. Take this drug at least 1 hour before or 1 hour after taking any antacids or products that have iron or zinc.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.

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

- 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.
- If you miss taking this drug for a few days in a row, call your doctor before you start taking it again.

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

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep lid tightly closed.
- 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

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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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