PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Spinosad

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

Natroba

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat head lice.
- It is used to treat scabies.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

For all patients taking 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.

Children:

- If the patient is a child younger than 6 months of age. Do not give this drug to an infant younger than 6 months of

age.

Scabies:

- If the patient is a child younger than 4 years of age. This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 4 years of age.

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.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs or products on your skin. This includes soaps.
- This drug has benzyl alcohol in it. Benzyl alcohol may cause severe and sometimes deadly side effects in newborns or infants when given in an injection through

the vein. This drug is not approved for use in newborns or infants younger than 6 months of age.

- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- 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.

Scabies:

- If you are breast-feeding and use this drug on your breast or nipple, wash the area before breast-feeding your child.

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.

- Irritation where this drug was used.
- Eye irritation.

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 you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

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.

Lice:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your scalp and hair only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, ears, and eyes (may burn).
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Cover eyes and face with a towel. Keep eyes closed tightly.
- Shake well before use.
- Do not wet hair before putting this drug on.
- Coat hair and scalp.
- Leave on for 10 minutes.
- Rinse fully with warm water. You may use shampoo after this drug is rinsed out.
- You may use a special nit comb or tweezers to get rid of dead nits (lice eggs) from hair, but you do not have to get rid of the nits. The lotion kills the nits too.
- Wash all hair combs, brushes, hair clips, bedding, towels, and recently worn clothes in hot water or have them dry cleaned.

Scabies:

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

- Wash your hands before and after use. If your hand is the treated area, do not wash your hand after use.
- Shake well before use.
- Put a thin layer on the skin from the neck to the toes. Put in the skin folds, creases, spaces between the fingers and toes, and soles of the feet.
- If you are balding, put on your scalp, hairline, temples, and forehead.
- Let the drug dry for at least 10 minutes before you cover it with clothes or gloves.
- Do not bathe, shower, or swim for 6 hours after putting on.
- Put under fingernails.
- Wash all bedding, towels, and recently worn clothes in hot water or have them dry cleaned.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Put on a missed dose as soon as you think about it.

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

- Store at room temperature.
- 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2025-08-25

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Spinosad - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center