Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Tafenoquine

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

Arakoda; Krintafel

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent malaria.
- It is used to prevent malaria from coming back (relapse) after treatment.

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 glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency or you have not been tested for it.
- If you have ever had any mental health or behavior problems.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Dofetilide or metformin.
- If you are taking any drugs to prevent or treat malaria.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding and your child has G6PD deficiency or your child has not been tested for it. Do not breast-feed for 3 months after taking this drug if your child has G6PD deficiency or has not been tested for it.

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?

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.
- People with an enzyme deficiency called G6PD deficiency may have more chance of getting hemolysis. The risk of G6PD deficiency may be higher in people of African, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean descent. Do not take this drug if you have G6PD deficiency. You may need to be screened for G6PD deficiency before taking this drug. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. A pregnancy test will be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant.
- If you may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug and for 3 months after your last dose. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

Preventing malaria:

- Other measures are needed along with this drug including using screens, bed netting, insect repellent (10% to 35% DEET), and permethrin spray on clothing and nets. Avoid spraying most insect repellents on children. Lower evening and night-time outdoor activity.

- If you have a fever while in or after leaving a malaria area, 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:

- 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 hemolytic anemia like dark lips or urine, dizziness or passing out, feeling confused, feeling very tired or weak, pale skin, shortness of breath, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of methemoglobinemia like a blue or gray color of the lips, nails, or skin; a heartbeat that does not feel normal; seizures; severe dizziness or passing out; severe headache; feeling very sleepy; feeling tired or weak; or shortness of breath. This effect is rare but may be deadly if it happens.
- Mental, mood, or behavior changes that are new or worse.
- Strange or odd dreams.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Feeling confused.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.

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:

For all uses of this drug:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Dizziness or headache.

Preventing malaria:

- Back pain.
- Diarrhea.
- Motion sickness.

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.

For all uses of this drug:

- Take this drug with food.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

Preventing malaria:

- If using to prevent malaria, start this drug before traveling to the high risk place as you have been told by the doctor.
- It is important that you do not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.

Preventing relapse:

- If you throw up within 1 hour of taking this drug, call your doctor to find out what to do.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Preventing malaria:

- If a dose is missed, check the package insert or call the doctor or pharmacist to find out what to do.

Preventing relapse:

- Most of the time, 1 dose of this drug is needed. If you miss the dose, take it as soon as you think about it with food. If you need to take more than 1 dose of this drug, follow what your doctor has told you to do.

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

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

2025-03-13

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.

Tafenoquine - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center