PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Abatacept

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

Orencia; Orencia ClickJect

Brand Names: Canada

Orencia

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat juvenile arthritis.
- It is used to treat psoriatic arthritis.
- It is used to prevent graft versus host disease (GVHD) in certain people who are getting a bone marrow transplant.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Adalimumab, certolizumab, etanercept, golimumab, or infliximab.
- If your child is taking anakinra, rituximab, or toclizumab.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug may be used with other drugs to treat your child's health condition. If your child is also taking other drugs, talk with your child's doctor about the risks and side effects that may happen.
- Your child may have more chance of getting an infection. Some infections have been deadly. Have your child wash hands often. Have your child stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Your child will need a TB (tuberculosis) test before starting this drug.
- Hepatitis B testing may be done. A hepatitis B infection may get worse while taking this drug.
- Make sure your child is up to date with all vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines while taking this drug and after your child stops taking it. Vaccine use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well. Talk with the doctor.
- Breathing problems have happened more often in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) when taking this drug. This includes COPD that gets worse, cough, and trouble breathing. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may add to the chance of getting some types of cancer. Talk with

the doctor.

- Have your child's skin checked often. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.
- If your child used this drug during pregnancy, tell the baby's doctor. You will need to discuss the safety and timing of certain vaccines with the doctor.

Vials:

- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with the doctor about which glucose tests are best to use.

Preventing graft versus host disease (GVHD):

- If your child has had a cytomegalovirus (CMV) or Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infection, talk with the doctor. CMV and EBV infections have happened with this drug. They have also become active again in people who had these infections before. The doctor may have your child take other drugs to prevent these infections.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

For all uses of 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.

- 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 high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Flu-like signs.
- Warm, red, or painful skin or sores on the body.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Change in color or size of a mole.
- Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.

Preventing graft versus host disease (GVHD):

- 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.

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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Upset stomach.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.

- Back pain.
- Nosebleed.
- Bruising, itching, pain, or redness where the shot was given.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Vials:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- It is given into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving your child the shot, your child's doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Wash your hands before and after you give the shot.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Before using this drug, take it out of the refrigerator and leave it at room temperature for 30 minutes.
- If you see a small air bubble in the device, do not get rid of it.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.

- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Do not rub the site where you give the shot.
- Throw syringe away after use. Do not use the same syringe more than one time.
- 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.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

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

Vials:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.

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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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

2025-12-23

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.

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

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center