PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Amiodarone

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

Nexterone; Pacerone [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Amiodarone; DOM-Amiodarone [DSC]; JAMP-Amiodarone; PMS-Amiodarone; PRO-Amiodarone-200; RIVA-Amiodarone; SANDOZ Amiodarone; TEVA-Amiodarone

Warning

- This drug is only used to treat abnormal heartbeats that may be deadly. It may cause severe and sometimes deadly side effects like lung, thyroid, or liver problems. This drug can also cause the abnormal heartbeats to get worse. Blood work, tests, and other exams will need to be done to check for side effects. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug will be started in a hospital where your child will be closely watched. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat certain types of abnormal heartbeats.

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 has any of these health problems: Certain types of abnormal heartbeats called heart block or sick-sinus syndrome, shock caused by heart problems, or slow heartbeat.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Low calcium, magnesium, or potassium levels.
- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- If your child takes any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug, like certain drugs that are used for hepatitis C, HIV, infections, and others. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug. Your child may also need to avoid breast-feeding a baby for some time after the last dose. Talk with your child's doctor to see if your child needs to avoid breast-feeding a baby after the last dose.

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?

- 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.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- Have your child's blood work checked and eye exams as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Low blood pressure has happened with this drug. Sometimes this has been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your child's blood pressure checked as you have been told.
- Slow heartbeat and the need to get a pacemaker have happened when amiodarone was given with sofosbuvir and certain other hepatitis C drugs. Sometimes, this has been deadly. If your child also takes drugs for hepatitis C, talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child has a defibrillator or pacemaker, talk with the doctor.
- If your child will be having a heart transplant, talk with the doctor. Patients taking this drug may have a risk of a life-threatening problem that sometimes happens within 24 hours after getting a heart transplant.
- Avoid giving your child grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- If your child has diarrhea or throws up, talk with your child's doctor. You will need to make sure your child avoids getting dehydrated and electrolyte problems.
- A very bad eye problem has rarely happened with this drug. This may lead to a change in eyesight and sometimes loss of eyesight, which may not come back. Talk with the doctor.

- Your child may get sunburned more easily. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects from the sun.
- Long-term use of this drug may lead to certain nerve problems. This may not go back to normal when this drug is stopped. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug stays in the body for weeks or months after it is stopped. Before your child starts taking other drugs, be sure to tell the doctor and pharmacist that your child has taken this drug.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. If your child plans to get pregnant or father a child, talk with the doctor before your child takes this drug.

If your child is pregnant:

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy. If your child is pregnant or gets pregnant while taking this drug, call the doctor right away.

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:

All products:

- 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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin

or eyes.

- Signs of lung or breathing problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough, or fever.
- Signs of thyroid problems like change in weight; feeling nervous, excitable, restless, or weak; hair thinning; depression; eye or neck swelling; not able to focus; trouble with heat or cold; menstrual changes; shakiness; or sweating.
- Change in balance.
- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Blue or gray skin color.
- Sunburn.
- Coughing up blood.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Fast or slow heartbeat.
- An abnormal heartbeat that is new or worse.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- If bright lights bother your child's eyes.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Muscle weakness.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Lowered interest in sex.

Injection:

- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your child's nurse if your child has any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your child's body.

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:

- Constipation, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Headache.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Flushing.
- Change in taste.
- Change in sense of smell.
- More saliva.

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.

Tablets:

- Give this drug with or without food but give it the same way each time. Always give with food or always give on an empty stomach.
- Give this drug with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- If your child is taking cholestyramine, talk with the pharmacist about how to give it with this drug.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

Injection:

- It is given into a vein for a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Tablets:

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Injection:

- This drug will be given in a health care setting.

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

Tablets:

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

Injection:

- This drug will be given in a healthcare setting. You will not store it at home.

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.

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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

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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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