PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Baricitinib

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
Olumiant

Brand Names: Canada
Olumiant

Warning

- Severe infections like tuberculosis, shingles, fungal infections, and other bacterial or viral infections have happened in patients who take this drug. Sometimes, these have been deadly. The risk is greater if your child also takes drugs that suppress the immune system like methotrexate or corticosteroids. If your child gets a bad infection, the doctor may stop this drug until the infection is under control.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started

on this drug. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never had signs of the infection. Your child may be tested to see if they have been exposed to TB before starting this drug. Do not give this drug if your child has TB.

- Lymphoma, skin cancer, and other types of cancer have happened in people treated with this drug.
- Heart attack, stroke, and death may happen in patients treated with this drug. A study of a drug like this one in people with rheumatoid arthritis showed a higher risk of these effects than with certain other drugs. These people were at least 50 years of age with at least 1 heart disease risk factor. This drug is not approved to treat rheumatoid arthritis in children.
- Blood clots have happened with this drug. Sometimes blood clots were severe or deadly. Studies of this drug and of another drug like it in people with rheumatoid arthritis showed a higher risk of blood clots than with certain other drugs. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell the doctor if your child smokes, has smoked in the past, or has ever had a heart attack, other heart problems, stroke, or blood clot.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used in certain people to treat COVID-19.
- It is used to treat a type of hair loss called alopecia areata.
- If your child has been given this drug for some other reason, talk with the doctor about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about giving this drug to your child.

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: Anemia, infection, low white blood cell count, kidney disease, or liver disease.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Abatacept, adalimumab, anakinra, azathioprine, certolizumab, cyclosporine, etanercept, golimumab, infliximab, probenecid, rituximab, ruxolitinib, sarilumab, tofacitinib, or tocilizumab.
- If your child is taking any drugs that suppress the immune system. There are many drugs that can do this.

Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby for at least 4 days after using this drug.

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.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your child's blood sugar closely.

- High cholesterol and triglyceride levels have happened with this drug. If your child has high cholesterol or triglycerides, talk with the doctor.
- Some viral infections like herpes zoster have become active again with this drug. Tell your child's doctor if your child has ever had a viral infection like herpes zoster.
- Hepatitis B or C testing may be done. A hepatitis B or C infection may get worse while taking this drug.
- Your child's skin may need to be checked while taking this drug. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- 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. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of very bad infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- Your child may have more chance of getting infections. Have your child wash hands often. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Your child may need to use birth control to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.

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:

- 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, or sweating; cough; muscle aches; shortness of breath; more sputum or change in color of sputum; red, warm, swollen, painful, or blistered skin; weight loss; stomach pain; diarrhea; pain with passing urine; or passing urine more often.
- Signs of shingles like pain, itching, or tingling; fever;

muscle aches; or rash (with or without blisters).

- Signs of low blood sugar like dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, shaking, a fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating.
- Change in color or size of a mole.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Vaginal yeast infection. Report itching, bad odor, or discharge.
- Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.
- Tears in the stomach or bowel wall have happened in some people taking this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has swelling or pain in the stomach that is severe, gets worse, or does not go away. Call your child's doctor right away if your child vomits blood or has a fever, vomit that looks like coffee grounds; upset stomach or vomiting that does not go away; black, tarry, or bloody stools; or a change in bowel habits.
- Call the doctor or get medical help right away if your

child has signs of heart attack or stroke. This includes chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, dizziness or passing out, severe headache, weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in eyesight or balance, or drooping on 1 side of the face.

- Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.

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:

For all uses of this drug:

- Signs of a common cold.
- Upset stomach.
- Cold sores.

For alopecia areata:

- Headache.
- Pimples (acne).
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Stomach pain.
- Weight gain.
- Raised bumps where the hair comes out of the skin.

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.

- Give this drug with or without food.
- 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.
- If your child cannot swallow this drug whole, you may

place the dose in about 10 mL of room temperature water. Swirl gently and have your child drink right away. Rinse cup with about 10 mL of room temperature water and have your child drink again.

- Those who have feeding tubes may use this drug. Use as you have been told. Flush the feeding tube after this drug is given.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, 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.

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 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.

Additional Information

When used for COVID-19, fact sheets for patients, parents, and caregivers are available to give information to properly inform the adult receiving the drug or, in the case of a minor, the child's parent or legal representative about the risks and benefits of the drug. The provider is required to give a copy of the fact sheet.

https://www.fda.gov/media/143824/download?attachment

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

2026-10-30

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.

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

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center