PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Chlordiazepoxide

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.

Warning

- This drug is a benzodiazepine. The use of a benzodiazepine drug along with opioid drugs has led to very bad side effects. Side effects that have happened include slowed or trouble breathing and death. Opioid drugs include drugs like codeine, oxycodone, and morphine. Opioid drugs are used to treat pain and some are used to treat cough. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child is taking this drug with an opioid drug, get medical help right away if your child feels very sleepy or dizzy; if your child has slow, shallow, or trouble breathing; or if your child passes out. Get medical help right away if your child does not respond, does not answer or react like normal, or will

not wake up.

- Benzodiazepines can put your child at risk for drug use disorder. Misuse or abuse of this drug can lead to overdose or death, especially when used along with certain other drugs, alcohol, or street drugs. Drug use disorder can happen even if your child takes this drug as told by the doctor. Get medical help right away if your child has changes in mood or behavior, suicidal thoughts or actions, seizures, or trouble breathing.
- Your child will be watched closely to make sure your child does not misuse this drug or develop drug use disorder.
- Benzodiazepines may cause dependence. Lowering the dose or stopping this drug all of a sudden may cause withdrawal. This can be life-threatening. The risk of dependence and withdrawal are raised the longer your child takes this drug and the higher the dose. Talk to the doctor before you lower the dose or stop giving this drug. You will need to follow the doctor's instructions. Get medical help right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements, seizures, new or worse behavior or mood changes like depression or thoughts of suicide, thoughts of harming someone, hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there), losing contact with reality,

moving around or talking a lot, or any other bad effects.

- Sometimes, withdrawal signs can last for several weeks to more than 12 months. Tell the doctor if your child has anxiety; trouble with memory, learning, or focusing; trouble sleeping; burning, numbness, or tingling; weakness; shaking; muscle twitching; ringing in the ears; or any other bad effects.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat anxiety.
- It is used to treat alcohol withdrawal.
- 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 younger than 6 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 6 years of age.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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 blood work checked if your child is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.

- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- Do not give more than what the doctor told you to give. Do not give more often or longer than what you were told. Doing any of these things may raise the chance of very bad side effects.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling, which can cause broken bones. The risk of falling is higher in people who are weak or frail. If you have questions, 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.
- Taking this drug late in pregnancy may raise the chance of breathing or feeding problems, low body temperature, or withdrawal symptoms in the newborn. Talk with the doctor.

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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Change in balance.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Feeling confused.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever,

chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or if your child feels very tired or weak.

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:

- Feeling sleepy.

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. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- If your child takes this drug on a regular basis, 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.
- Many times this drug is given on an as needed basis. Do not give to your child more often than told by the doctor.

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

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep lid tightly closed.
- Store this drug in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it, and where other people cannot get to it. A locked box or area may help keep this drug safe. Keep all drugs away from 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

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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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