PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Enfuvirtide

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

Fuzeon [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

Fuzeon [DSC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat HIV infection.

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 pregnant, may become pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. Before giving this drug to your child, you will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby. You will also need to talk about the best way for your child to prevent passing HIV to the baby.

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 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 run out of this drug.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- If your child smokes, talk with the doctor.
- If your child has a bleeding problem or takes a blood thinner, talk with your child's doctor. The risk of bleeding after an injection may be higher.
- This drug is not a cure for HIV. Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by the doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well. Be sure your child stays under the care of the doctor and has regular appointments.
- This drug helps to lower how much HIV is in the blood. Lowering the amount of HIV in the blood until it is not detected on blood tests can help lower the risk of spreading HIV to others. There are also other ways to help prevent the spread of HIV to others. This includes using condoms during sex and not sharing needles and other injection equipment. Talk with your child's doctor or other health care provider about the best way to prevent spreading HIV to others.
- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.

- Nerve problems have happened when this drug was given with a certain device (Biojector 2000 needle-free device). This includes nerve pain or a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling. These effects can last up to 6 months. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Kidney problems have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these have been deadly. 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 a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- 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.
- Fever or chills.
- Severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Fast breathing.
- Eye irritation.
- Changes in your child's immune system can happen when your child starts taking drugs to treat HIV. If your child has an infection that you did not know was there, it may show up when your child takes this drug. Tell your child's doctor right away if your child has any new signs after starting this drug, even after taking it for several months. This includes signs of infection like

fever, sore throat, weakness, cough, or shortness of breath.

- A nervous system problem called Guillain-Barre syndrome has happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has weakness or a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Some people taking this drug may get pneumonia more often than people not taking this drug. It is not clear if this effect is caused by this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a cough, fever, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.

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:

- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or decreased appetite.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Weight loss.
- Sinus irritation.
- Pain in arms or legs.
- Flu-like signs.
- Dry mouth.
- It is common to have reactions where the injection is given. This includes pain, redness, itching, bruising, and swelling. Call your child's doctor if any of these effects are severe, bother your child, or do not go away.

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.

- It is given as a shot 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.
- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- This drug needs to be mixed before use. Follow how to mix as you were told by the doctor.
- Do not shake.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- If solution is foamy or jelly-like, let sit for more time to let the drug to dissolve.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin that is tattooed or into irritated skin. This includes moles, scars, bruises, and burns. Do not give into the buttocks, knee, groin, near the belly button, or area over a blood vessel.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Each vial is for one use only. Throw away any part not used after the dose is given.
- 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?

- 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 unopened vials at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Use right away after mixing or you may store in a refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- 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

2023-10-23

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.

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