MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Formoterol

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

Perforomist

Brand Names: Canada

Foradil [DSC]; Oxeze Turbuhaler

Warning

- Drugs like this one may raise the chance of asthma-related deaths in people with asthma who do **not** also use an inhaled steroid. It appears that this effect does not apply to people with COPD. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Drugs like this one may raise the chance of asthma-related hospital stays in children and teenagers with asthma who do **not** also use an inhaled steroid. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Do not give this drug to treat asthma if your child is **not** also using an inhaled steroid. Do not give this drug to treat asthma if your child's asthma is well controlled by an inhaled steroid.

What is this drug used for?

All inhaler products:

- It is used to treat asthma.
- Do not use this drug to treat intense flare-ups of shortness of breath. Use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler). If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

Inhaler (powder):

- It is used to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise.

Liquid for breathing in:

- This drug is not approved for use in children. However, the doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this drug, ask the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions 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 is allergic to milk, talk with the doctor.
- If your child has a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- If your child is using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your child's doctor or pharmacist.
- If the patient is a child younger than 6 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 6 years of age.

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.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), this drug may sometimes raise blood sugar. Talk with your child's doctor about how to keep your child's blood sugar under control.
- To help control and improve your child's breathing problem, it is important that your child does not run out of this drug. Be sure to get a refill before your child runs out.
- Call the doctor right away if your child has breathing problems that get worse, if the rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) does not work as well, or if your child needs to use the rescue inhaler more often.
- Do not give more of this drug or have your child use it more often than you were told. Deaths have happened when too much of this type of drug has been taken. Talk with your child's 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.

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 high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Signs of too much acid in the blood (acidosis) like confusion; fast breathing; fast heartbeat; a heartbeat that does not feel normal; very bad stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up; feeling very sleepy; shortness of breath; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- This drug can cause very bad breathing problems right after your child takes a dose. Sometimes, this may be life-threatening. If your child has trouble breathing, breathing that is worse, wheezing, or coughing after using this drug, have your child use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) and get medical help right away.

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:

- Headache.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Shakiness.
- Dry mouth.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.

All inhaler products:

- For breathing in only by an inhaler into the lungs.
- Put the cap back on after your child is done using a dose.
- Do not use a spacer with the inhaler.
- Use new inhaler with each refill.
- 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.

Inhaler (powder):

- If giving this drug to prevent breathing problems that happen with exercise, give right before your child exercises.

Capsules for breathing in:

- Do not let your child swallow the capsule. The contents of the capsule will be breathed into the lungs.
- Do not take this drug out of the blister pack until you are ready to give this drug to your child. Give this drug right away after opening the blister pack. Do not store the removed drug for future use.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it has been 6 hours or more since the missed 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 for asthma caused by working out. Do not give more often than every 12 hours unless told to do so by the doctor.

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

All inhaler products:

- Store at room temperature.
- 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.

Capsules for breathing in:

- Store this drug in the blister pack that it comes in.
- Protect from heat.

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

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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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