PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ifosfamide

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

Ifex

Brand Names: Canada

Ifex

Warning

- 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. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Your child will need blood work checked before starting this drug and during treatment. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause very bad and sometimes deadly nervous system problems. These include brain problems, hallucinations, and confusion. Sometimes, people have fallen into a coma. Nervous system problems may start within a few hours after getting this drug and may last for 2 to 3 days after stopping it. Talk with the doctor.
- Kidney problems have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these have been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause blood in the urine and bladder problems. Another drug called mesna can be used to help lessen these problems. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Have your child's urine checked as you have been told by the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat testicular cancer.
- 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 has a low platelet count or a low white blood cell count.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Trouble passing urine, blockage in the urinary tract, or urinary tract infection (UTI).

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug and for 1 week 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.
- 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.
- Your child will need to pass urine after getting this drug. This helps to get rid of the drug from the bladder. Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids during or right after getting this drug unless the doctor tells you otherwise. Have your child continue to drink liquids as the doctor has told you.
- If your child drinks grapefruit juice or eats grapefruit often, talk with your child's doctor.
- To help with mouth sores, have your child use a soft toothbrush or cotton swabs and rinse the mouth. Do not let your child use mouth rinses that have

alcohol in them.

- 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.
- Your child may bleed more easily. Make sure your child is careful and avoids injury. Be sure your child has a soft toothbrush.
- 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.
- Other types of cancer may rarely happen later in life.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- A severe side effect that affects the bones and kidneys has also happened in children taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- People treated with this drug may go through menopause at a younger age than normal. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to your child not being able to get pregnant or father a child later in life. This may go back to normal but sometimes it may not. Talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child is of childbearing age, a pregnancy test will be done before starting this drug and while taking it to show that your child is NOT pregnant.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy.
- If your child may become pregnant, birth control must be used while taking this drug and for 12 months after your child's last dose. If your child gets

pregnant, call the doctor right away.

- If your child's sex partner may become pregnant, birth control must be used while taking this drug and for 6 months after the last dose. If your child's partner becomes pregnant, 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, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- 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.
- Feeling confused.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Change in eyesight.

- Depression or other mood changes.
- Change in the way your child acts.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Not able to control passing urine.
- Seizures.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Skin wound that will not heal.
- Hearing loss.
- Ringing in ears.
- Bone pain.
- Heart problems like heart failure and certain abnormal heartbeats have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these heart problems have been deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat; severe dizziness or passing out; or shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Liver problems have rarely happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has 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.
- Some people have had lung problems with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of lung problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough that is new or worse, or fever.

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:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Hair loss.

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 an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

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

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

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.

- 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.
- 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

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.

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

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center