PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Indomethacin

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

Indocin

Brand Names: Canada

AURO-Indomethacin; MINT-Indomethacin; ODAN-Indomethacin; TEVA-Indomethacin

Warning
All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- This drug may raise the chance of heart and blood vessel side effects like heart attack and stroke. If these happen, they can be deadly. The risk of these side effects may be greater if your child has heart disease or risks for heart disease. However, the risk may also be raised in people who do not have heart disease or risks for heart disease. The risk of these health problems can happen as soon as the first weeks of using this drug and may be greater with higher doses or with long-term use. Do not give this drug to your child right before or after bypass heart surgery.
- This drug may raise the chance of severe and sometimes deadly stomach or bowel problems like ulcers or bleeding. The risk is greater in older people, and in people who have had stomach or bowel ulcers or bleeding before. These problems may occur without warning signs.

What is this drug used for?

Injection:

- It is used to treat patent ductus arteriosus (PDA).

All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- It is used to manage pain.
- It is used to treat some types of arthritis.
- 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?

All products:

- 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 an allergy to aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen.
- If your child has ever had asthma caused by a salicylate drug like aspirin or a drug like this one like NSAIDs.

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- If your child has any health problems that this drug must not be taken with like an untreated infection, certain bleeding problems, and certain types of heart or kidney disease. There are many health problems that your child must not take this drug with.
- If your child has low platelet levels.
- If your child has bowel problems.

All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- If your child has any of these health problems: Dehydration, GI (gastrointestinal) bleeding, heart failure (weak heart), kidney disease, or liver disease.
- If your child has had a recent heart attack.
- If your child is having their fertility checked.
- If your child is taking any other NSAID, a salicylate like aspirin or diflunisal, triamterene, or pemetrexed.

If your child is pregnant:

- Talk to the doctor if your child is pregnant, plans to become pregnant, or gets pregnant while taking this drug. This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby if taken at 20 weeks or later in pregnancy. If your child is

between 20 to 30 weeks of pregnancy, only give this drug if the doctor has told you to. Do not give this drug to your child if she is more than 30 weeks pregnant.

Suppository:

- If your child has had any of these health problems: Swelling of the rectum or anus, or recent rectal bleeding.

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?

All products:

- 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.

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- Your child may bleed more easily. Talk with the doctor.

All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- 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 may bleed more easily. Make sure your child is careful and avoids injury. Be sure your child has a soft toothbrush.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- If your child smokes, talk with the doctor.
- Have blood work checked if your child is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- High blood pressure has happened with drugs like this one. Have your child's blood pressure checked as you have been told by the doctor.

- Do not give your child more of this drug than what the doctor told you to give. Giving more of this drug than you are told may raise the chance of severe side effects.
- Do not have your child use longer than you have been told by your child's doctor.
- If your child has asthma, talk with the doctor. Your child may be more sensitive to this drug.
- If your child is allergic to tartrazine (FD&C Yellow No. 5), talk with your child's doctor. Some products have tartrazine.
- The chance of heart failure is raised with the use of drugs like this one. In people who already have heart failure, the chance of heart attack, having to go to the hospital for heart failure, and death is raised. Talk with the doctor.
- The chance of heart attack and heart-related death is raised in people taking drugs like this one after a recent heart attack. People taking drugs like this one after a first heart attack were also more likely to die in the year after the heart attack compared with people not taking drugs like this one. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child is taking aspirin to help prevent a heart attack, talk with the doctor.
- Depression or other mood problems, seizures, and

health problems like Parkinson's disease have gotten worse with this drug. Tell the doctor if your child has any of these health problems and signs get worse.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- NSAIDs like this drug may affect egg release (ovulation). This may affect being able to get pregnant. This goes back to normal when this drug is stopped. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to 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:

All products:

- 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 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.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and other serious reactions. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in the mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever; chills; body aches; shortness of breath; or swollen glands.

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- 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.
- Signs of electrolyte problems like mood changes; confusion; muscle pain, cramps, or spasms; weakness; shakiness; change in balance; an abnormal heartbeat; seizures; loss of appetite; or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Slow heartbeat.
- Long stops between breaths.
- This drug may irritate the vein. If the drug leaks from the vein, it may also cause irritation around that area. Tell your child's nurse if your child has any redness, burning, pain, swelling, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your child's body.

All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- Signs of high potassium levels like a heartbeat that does not feel normal; feeling confused; feeling weak, lightheaded, or dizzy; feeling like passing out; numbness or tingling; or shortness of breath.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or

dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.

- Chest pain or pressure.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Change in eyesight.
- Ringing in ears.
- Depression.
- Flu-like signs.
- Liver problems have happened with drugs like this one. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call the 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.

Suppository:

- Bleeding from rectum or rectal pain.

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:

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- Irritation where the shot is given.

All products other than injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- Headache.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Heartburn.
- Gas.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.

Suppository:

- Rectal irritation.

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 oral products:

- Give this drug with food to help prevent an upset stomach.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.

Liquid (suspension):

- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

Extended-release capsules:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.

Suppository:

- Use suppository rectally.
- Do not give the suppository by mouth. Do not put in the vagina.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- If suppository is soft, chill in a refrigerator or run cold

water over it.

- Take foil off the rectal suppository and put in, pointed end first. Do not handle too much.

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- This drug will be given in a health care setting.

All oral products:

- 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?

Capsules:

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Liquid (suspension):

- Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate or freeze.
- Protect from heat.

- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Suppository:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.

Injection for patent ductus arteriosus (PDA):

- The injection will be given to your child in a healthcare setting. You will not store it at home.

All products:

- 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
2025-01-03

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.

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