PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Leucovorin Calcium

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

Lederle Leucovorin; Vykoura

## Brand Names: Canada

JAMP-Leucovorin; Lederle Leucovorin; MINT-Leucovorin; RIVA Leucovorin

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used with methotrexate to avoid side effects.
- It may lower the side effects of some drugs.
- It is used to help with some kinds of anemia.
- It is used in certain people to treat cerebral folate transport deficiency.
- 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 anemia caused by a lack of vitamin B12.
- If your child has stomach or bowel problems.
- If your child has low levels of a protein called methenyltetrahydrofolate

synthetase (MTHFS).

- If your child is taking trimethoprim and sulfamethoxazole.

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.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- If this drug is used with fluorouracil, side effects from fluorouracil may be increased. Problems like diarrhea, mouth irritation, and mouth sores may happen more often, may be worse, and may last longer. Deaths from severe bowel problems, diarrhea, and dehydration have happened in older people getting this drug with fluorouracil. If you have questions, talk with the 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.

### Injection:

- Some fluids used to mix this drug have benzyl alcohol. If possible, avoid products with benzyl alcohol in newborns or infants. Serious side effects can happen in these children with some doses of benzyl alcohol, including if given with other drugs that have benzyl alcohol. Talk with the doctor to see which fluids have benzyl alcohol.

## 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 calcium levels like weakness, confusion, feeling tired, headache, upset stomach and throwing up, constipation, or bone pain.
- Seizures.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.

## 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:

- Hair loss.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite are common

with this drug. If these happen, talk with the doctor about ways to lower these side effects. Call the doctor right away if any of these effects bother your child, do not get better, or are severe.

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.

### Tablets:

- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- 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.

### Wellcovorin tablets:

- If your child cannot swallow this drug whole, it may be dissolved in a liquid like water, breast milk, or infant formula. It may also be crushed and mixed with soft food. Give right away after mixing with liquid or soft food. Do not store the mixture for use at a later time.

### Injection:

- It is given as an injection into a muscle or vein.

## What do I do if my child misses a dose?

### Tablets:

- If your child misses a dose or throws up after taking a dose, call the doctor right away.

### Injection:

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

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

### Tablets:

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

### Injection:

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

### 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.

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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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