MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Mefloquine

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.

Warning

- This drug may cause side effects like dizziness; loss of balance; ringing in the ears; anxiety, paranoia, depression, restlessness, or other mood changes; behavior changes; seizures; confusion; or hallucinations. Some of these have lasted for months to years after the drug is stopped. Dizziness, ringing in the ears, and loss of balance may not go away. Do not give this drug to prevent malaria if your child has mental or mood problems. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any of these side effects.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent malaria.

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 ever had any of these health problems: Anxiety, depression, psychosis, schizophrenia, or any other mental or mood problem.

- If your child has had seizures, talk with the doctor.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Chloroquine, quinidine, or quinine.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Halofantrine or ketoconazole. Do not give these drugs within 15 weeks of your child's last dose of this drug.
- If your child has recently had a live vaccine.

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?

For all uses of 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.
- Have your child's patient safety card with you at all times.
- Have blood work checked if your child is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Have your child get an eye exam as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of seizures in some people, including people who have had seizures in the past. Talk to the doctor to see if your child has a greater chance of seizures while taking this drug.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Have your child use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask the doctor how long your child must use birth control. If your child becomes pregnant, call the doctor right away.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Tell your child's doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. This drug passes into breast milk and may harm your child's baby.

Preventing malaria:

- Other measures are needed along with this drug including using screens, bed netting, insect repellent (10% to 35% DEET), and permethrin spray on clothing and nets. Avoid spraying most insect repellents on children. Lower evening and night-time outdoor activity.
- If your child has a fever while in or after leaving a malaria area, call the doctor right away.
- If your child is pregnant and is traveling to a malaria-infested place, talk to the doctor about the risks first.

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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

- Chest pain or pressure or passing out.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Some people taking this drug have committed suicide. It is not known if this drug was the reason for the suicides. Tell your child's doctor if your child has thoughts of suicide.
- Blood cell problems have happened, like aplastic anemia and a type of low white blood cell count. Tell the doctor right away if your child feels very tired or weak or has a fever, chills, shortness of breath, any unexplained bruising or bleeding, or purple "splotches" on the skin.

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, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Muscle pain.
- Feeling tired or weak.

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.

For all uses of this drug:

- Give this drug with the largest meal of the day.
- Do not give on an empty stomach.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Tablet can be crushed and mixed with water, milk, or other liquid.
- 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.
- Talk with the doctor to find out what to do if your child throws up after taking a dose of this drug.

Preventing malaria:

- If using to prevent malaria, start this drug before traveling to the high risk place as you have been told by the doctor.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Treating malaria:

- Most of the time, 1 dose of this drug is needed. If you miss giving your child the dose, give it as soon as you think about it with food. If your child needs to take more than 1 dose of this drug, follow what your child's doctor has told you to do.

For all uses of this drug:

- 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.

- If you miss giving your child a dose before leaving for your trip, call your doctor.

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

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

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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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