PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Meperidine

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

Demerol

Warning

All products:

- This is an opioid drug. Opioid drugs can put your child at risk for drug use disorder. Misuse or abuse of this drug can lead to overdose and death. Your child will be watched closely while taking this drug.
- Severe breathing problems may happen with this drug. The risk is highest when your child first starts taking this drug or any time the dose is raised. These breathing problems can be deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has slow, shallow, or trouble breathing.
- Even one dose of this drug may be deadly if it is taken by someone else or by accident, especially in children. If this drug is taken by someone else or by accident, get medical help right away.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Severe side effects have happened when opioid drugs were used with benzodiazepines, alcohol, marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or street drugs. This includes severe drowsiness, breathing problems, and death. Benzodiazepines include drugs like alprazolam, diazepam, and

lorazepam. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

- Many drugs interact with this drug and can raise the chance of side effects like deadly breathing problems. Talk with your child's doctor and pharmacist to make sure it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's drugs.
- Get medical help right away if your child does not respond, answer, or react like normal; feels very sleepy or dizzy; passes out; or will not wake up.
- Do not give this drug if your child has taken isocarboxazid, linezolid, methylene blue, phenelzine, tranylcypromine, selegiline, or rasagiline in the last 14 days. Severe high blood pressure may happen. Sometimes this has been deadly.

If your child is pregnant:

- If your child is pregnant or plans to get pregnant, talk with your child's doctor right away about the benefits and risks of using this drug during pregnancy. Using this drug for a long time during pregnancy may lead to withdrawal in the newborn baby. Withdrawal in the newborn can be life-threatening if not treated.

Oral liquid:

- Be sure that you know how to measure your child's dose. Dosing errors can lead to accidental overdose and death. If you have any questions, talk with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to manage pain when non-opioid pain drugs do not treat your child's pain well enough or your child cannot take them.
- It is used during surgery.
- 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 any of these health problems: Lung or breathing problems like asthma, trouble breathing, or sleep apnea; high levels of carbon dioxide in the blood, or stomach or bowel block or narrowing.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Buprenorphine, butorphanol, nalbuphine, or pentazocine.

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.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- Do not give this drug with other strong pain drugs or pain patches without talking to your child's doctor first.

- Do not give more than the doctor told you to give. Do not give more often or for longer than you were told. Doing any of these things may raise the chance of severe side effects.
- If your child's pain gets worse, if your child feels more sensitive to pain, or if your child has new pain after taking this drug, call your child's doctor right away. Do not give more than ordered.
- If your child has been taking this drug for a long time or at high doses, it may not work as well and your child may need higher doses to get the same effect. This is known as tolerance. Call the doctor if this drug stops working well. Do not give more than ordered.
- Long-term or regular use of opioid drugs like this drug may lead to dependence. Lowering the dose or stopping this drug all of a sudden may cause a greater risk of withdrawal or other severe problems. Talk to your child's doctor before you lower the dose or stop giving this drug. You will need to follow the doctor's instructions. Tell your child's doctor if your child has more pain, mood changes, thoughts of suicide, or any other bad effects.
- Be sure your child does not drink alcohol or use products that have alcohol in them. Unsafe and sometimes deadly effects may happen.
- 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 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. Get medical help right away if your child's baby seems very sleepy, is limp, or has trouble breathing.

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 low blood sugar like dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, shaking, a fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Feeling confused.
- Seizures.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Trouble passing urine.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Mood changes.
- Severe constipation or stomach pain. These may be signs of a severe bowel problem.
- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.
- Noisy breathing.
- Breathing problems during sleep (sleep apnea).
- Shakiness.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Change in eyesight.

- A severe and sometimes deadly problem called serotonin syndrome may happen if your child takes this drug with certain other drugs. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has agitation; change in balance; confusion; hallucinations; fever; fast or abnormal heartbeat; flushing; muscle twitching or stiffness; seizures; shivering or shaking; sweating a lot; severe diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up; or severe headache.
- Taking an opioid pain drug like this drug may lead to a rare but severe adrenal gland problem. Call the doctor right away if your child feels very tired or weak, passes out, or has severe dizziness, very upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Long-term use of an opioid drug may lead to lower sex hormone levels. Call your child's doctor if your child has a lowered interest in sex, fertility problems, no menstrual period, or ejaculation problems.

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.
- Constipation.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Flushing.
- Sweating a lot.
- Headache.
- Stomach pain.
- Dry mouth.

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 by mouth only.
- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Do not let your child inject or snort this drug. Doing any of these things can cause very bad side effects like trouble breathing and death from overdose.

Oral liquid:

- 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.
- Do not use a household teaspoon or tablespoon to measure this drug. Doing so could lead to the dose being too high.
- Mix your child's dose with a half glass of water before your child drinks.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle, vein, or into the fatty part of the skin.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

All oral products:

- If your child takes this drug on a regular basis, 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.

- Many times this drug is given on an as needed basis. Do not give to your child more often than told by the doctor.

Injection:

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

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

All oral products:

- 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.

- Drugs called naloxone and nalmefene can be used to help treat an overdose of this drug. Talk with your child's doctor or pharmacist about how to get or use naloxone or nalmefene. If you think there has been an overdose, get medical care right away even if naloxone or nalmefene has been used. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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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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