PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Mepolizumab

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

Nucala

Brand Names: Canada

Nucala

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat asthma.
- It is used to treat hypereosinophilic syndrome (HES).
- If your child has been given this drug for some other reason, talk with the doctor about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about giving this drug to your child.

For asthma:

- Do not give this drug to treat an asthma attack. Use a rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler). If you have questions, 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.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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.

- Allergic reactions have happened with this drug. Most of the time, allergic reactions happen within hours after this drug was given. Sometimes, they can happen days after this drug was given. Talk with the doctor.
- Herpes zoster (shingles) has happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor to see if a vaccine is needed before getting this drug.
- Some people at high risk for parasite infections have gotten a parasite infection after taking this drug. The doctor may test your child's stool to see if your child has a parasite infection. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child is also taking an oral or inhaled steroid, talk with the doctor. Do not stop giving it to your child without talking 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.

For asthma:

- To help control and improve your child's breathing problem, it is important that your child does not run out

of this drug. Be sure to get a refill before your child runs out.

- Call the doctor right away if your child has breathing problems that get worse, if the rescue inhaler (quick relief inhaler) does not work as well, or if your child needs to use the rescue inhaler more often.

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- Some forms of this drug may not be for use in all ages of children. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Do not share pen or cartridge devices with another person even if the needle has been changed. Sharing these devices may pass infections from one person to another. This includes infections you may not know your child has.

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.

- Dizziness or passing out.
- Flushing.
- Feeling hot or cold.
- Shortness of breath.

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.
- Back pain.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Burning, itching, pain, redness, or swelling where the injection is given.

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.

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving your child the shot, your child's doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- To make the injection feel better, take this drug out of the refrigerator and allow it to sit at room temperature for up to 30 minutes before use. Do not remove the cap or cover. Do not heat this drug.
- Do not shake.
- Do not give into tender, bruised, red, or hard skin.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not rub the site where you give the shot.
- If your dose is more than 1 injection, you may give in the same body part. However, do not give injections within 2

inches (5 cm) of each other.

- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- This drug is colorless to slightly yellow or slightly brown. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Each prefilled pen or syringe is for 1 use only. Throw away the used pen or syringe after the dose is given.
- Throw away any part left over after the dose is given.
- Remove all pen needle covers before injecting a dose (there may be 2). If you are not sure what type of pen needle you have or how to use it, talk with the doctor.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.
- If you drop this drug on a hard surface, do not use it.

Vials:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it. After giving a missed dose, give the next dose on your child's normal day.
- If your child misses a dose and you remember when it is time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's regular schedule.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you are not sure what to do if your child misses a dose, call the doctor.

Vials:

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

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

Prefilled syringes and auto-injectors:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 7 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 7 days, throw this drug away.
- Protect from heat.
- Use within 8 hours after taking out of the carton. If not

used within 8 hours after taking out of the carton, throw this drug away.

Vials:

- 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 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

2025-06-12

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.

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

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center