PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Metronidazole (Systemic

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

Flagyl [DSC]; Likmez

Brand Names: Canada

APO-MetroNIDAZOLE; Auro-MetroNIDAZOLE; Flagyl [DSC]; M-Metronidazole; MINT-Metronidazole; PMS-Metronidazole

Warning

- Metronidazole has been shown to cause cancer in mice and rats with long-term use. Talk with the doctor.
- The doctor has given your child this drug for a certain health problem. Do not give this drug to your child for other health problems.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat infections.
- It is used to prevent infections during bowel 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 Cockayne syndrome. Some people with Cockayne syndrome have had liver problems when taking this drug. Sometimes, these liver problems have not gone away or have been deadly.
- If your child has taken disulfiram within the past 2 weeks.

If your child is less than 12 weeks pregnant:

- This drug is not for use in certain patients who are less than 12 weeks pregnant.

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 blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- 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.
- If your child is on dialysis, talk with the doctor.
- Alcohol interacts with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol. Be sure your child does not take products that have alcohol or propylene glycol in them while taking this drug and for at least 72 hours after the last dose. Drinking alcohol or taking products that have alcohol or propylene glycol in them, like some cough syrups, may cause stomach cramps, upset stomach or throwing up, headaches, and flushing.

- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.
- If your child is on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with the doctor. Some of these products have sodium.

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.

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.
- Redness or white patches in mouth or throat.

- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Pain when passing urine or blood in urine.
- Passing urine more often.
- Pelvic pain.
- Ringing in the ears, hearing loss, or any other changes in hearing.
- Nervous system problems have happened with this drug. Some people who took this drug for a long time have had nerve problems that lasted for a long time. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal; change in balance or eyesight; dizziness or passing out; headache; not able to sleep; seizures; or trouble speaking. Call your child's doctor right away if your child feels confused, depressed, irritable, tired, or weak.
- This drug may raise the chance of a very bad brain problem called aseptic meningitis. Call the doctor right away if your child has a headache, fever, chills, very upset stomach or throwing up, stiff neck, rash, bright lights bother the eyes, feeling sleepy, or feeling confused.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with this drug. This may lead to a higher chance of getting an

infection. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat.

- 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.

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:

All products:

- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Stomach cramps.
- Metallic taste.

- Headache.
- Joint pain.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Lowered interest in sex.

Infusion:

- Irritation where this drug 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.

All oral products:

- 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.

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.

Infusion:

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

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

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.

Infusion:

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

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

Tablets and 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 freeze.
- After opening, throw away any part not used after 60 days.

Infusion:

- 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

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Last Reviewed Date
2025-07-21

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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.

Metronidazole (Systemic - Last updated on December 12, 2022
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