PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ritonavir

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

Norvir

Brand Names: Canada

AURO-Ritonavir; Norvir

Warning

- This drug interacts with many other drugs. The chance of this drug's side effects may be raised or how well this drug works may be lowered. The chance of side effects from other drugs may also be raised. This may include severe, life-threatening, or deadly side effects. Many drugs must not be taken with this drug. Check with the doctor and pharmacist to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of their other drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins).

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat HIV infection.
- This drug is taken with other drugs. Be sure you know about the warnings, benefits, and risks of these other drugs. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about any of the drugs.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

All products:

- 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 liver disease.
- If your child is pregnant, may become pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You may need to avoid giving some forms of this drug if your child is pregnant. Before giving this drug to your child, you will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby. You will also need to talk about the best way for your child to prevent passing HIV to the baby.

Liquid (solution):

- If your child has a feeding tube. This drug is not for use with some types of feeding tubes.
- If your child is taking disulfiram.
- If your child is taking metronidazole.

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.
- High blood sugar has happened with this drug. This includes diabetes that is new or worse.
- Check your child's blood sugar as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug may cause high cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug is not a cure for HIV. Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by the doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well. Be sure your child stays under the care of the doctor and has regular appointments.
- This drug helps to lower how much HIV is in the blood. Lowering the amount of HIV in the blood until it is not detected on blood tests can help lower the risk of spreading HIV to others. There are also other ways to help prevent the spread of HIV to others. This includes using condoms during sex and not sharing needles and other injection equipment. Talk with your child's doctor or other health care provider about the best way to prevent spreading HIV to others.
- Some people with hemophilia have had times of more bleeding when taking drugs like this one. If your child has hemophilia, talk with the doctor.
- Liver problems and a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) have happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Birth control pills and other hormone-based birth control may not work as well to prevent pregnancy. Be sure your child uses some other kind of birth control also, like a condom, when taking this drug.

Liquid (solution):

- This drug has alcohol and propylene glycol in it. These may cause very bad and sometimes deadly side effects in newborns or young children. Do not use this drug in premature newborns for some time after birth or in newborns younger than 14 days old unless the doctor tells you to.
- If the patient is a child younger than 6 months, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in these children.

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 blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- 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.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.

- Severe or long-lasting diarrhea. This may lead to fluid and electrolyte problems.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Flushing.
- Sweating a lot.
- Swelling.
- Blurred eyesight.
- Change in body fat.
- Back pain, belly pain, groin pain, or blood in the urine. May be signs of a kidney stone.
- Changes in your child's immune system can happen when your child starts taking drugs to treat HIV. If your child has an infection that you did not know was there, it may show up when your child takes this drug. Tell your child's doctor right away if your child has any new signs after starting this drug, even after taking it for several months. This includes signs of infection like fever, sore throat, weakness, cough, or shortness of breath.
- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

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:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.

- Stomach pain or heartburn.
- Gas.
- Change in taste.
- Numbness or tingling in the hands, feet, or around the mouth.
- Back, muscle, or joint pain.

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 products:

- Give this drug with meals.
- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.

Tablets:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.

Liquid (solution):

- 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.
- You may give the liquid alone or mix with a full glass (8 ounces/240 mL) of chocolate milk, Ensure®, or Advera® to make it taste better. Give this drug within 1 hour of mixing.

Powder packet:

- Be sure you know how many packets to use.
- Mix the powder with soft food like apple sauce or vanilla pudding. You may also mix with liquid like water, chocolate milk, or infant formula. Give this drug within 2 hours of mixing. Throw away any part not taken after mixing.
- Give with food to help lower the bitter taste.
- Those who have feeding tubes may use this drug. Use as you have been told. Flush the feeding tube after this drug is given.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- 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 are not sure what to do if your child misses a dose, call the doctor.

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

Liquid (solution):

- Store solution in the original container at room temperature. Keep the cap tightly closed. Throw away when the date on the bottle has been reached.

Tablets:

- Store in the original container at room temperature. Keep the cap tightly closed. If stored outside of the original container, throw away any part not used after 2 weeks. This drug may be exposed to temperatures between 86°F and 122°F (30°C and 50°C) for 7 days.

Powder packet:

- Store at room temperature.

All products:

- Protect from heat.
- Store 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.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.

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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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