PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Sarilumab

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

Kevzara

Brand Names: Canada

Kevzara

Warning

- This drug may raise the chance of infection, including severe infections. Sometimes severe infections have led to death. Most people who had these infections were taking other drugs to lower the immune system like methotrexate or steroid drugs. If your child has any infection, is taking antibiotics now or in the recent past, or has had many infections, talk with your child's doctor.
- Do not give this drug to your child if your child has an infection.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started on this drug. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never got the infection. The doctor may test to see if your child has been exposed to TB before starting this drug.
- If your child has a long-term infection or an infection that keeps coming back, talk with the doctor.
- Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any signs of infection like fever, chills, flu-like signs, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or a wound that will not heal.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat juvenile arthritis.

Prefilled pen:

- This form of this drug is not approved for use in children. However, your child's doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this form of this drug, ask your child's doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions about this drug.

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 liver disease or raised liver enzymes.
- If your child has a low platelet count or a low white blood cell count.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Abatacept, adalimumab, anakinra, certolizumab, etanercept, golimumab, infliximab, rituximab, secukinumab, tocilizumab, ustekinumab, or vedolizumab.
- If your child is taking tofacitinib.

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.
- Some viral infections like herpes zoster have become active again with this drug. Tell your child's doctor if your child has ever had a viral infection like herpes zoster.
- Make sure your child is up to date with all vaccines before treatment with this drug.

- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines while taking this drug and after your child stops taking it. Vaccine use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well. Talk with the doctor.
- Your child may bleed more easily. Make sure your child is careful and avoids injury. Be sure your child has a soft toothbrush.
- This drug may cause high cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Talk with the doctor.
- Holes in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract may rarely happen.
- This drug may add to the chance of getting some types of cancer. Talk with the doctor.

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.

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.
- If your child used this drug while pregnant, tell the baby's doctor.

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 a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Stomach pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Warm, red, or painful skin or sores on the body.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Vaginal irritation or discharge.
- Sweating a lot.
- Weight loss.
- Diarrhea.
- Feeling very tired or weak.

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:

- Pain or redness where the injection was given.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Nose or throat irritation.

- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Constipation.
- Muscle 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.

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh or the belly area.
- If you will be giving your child the shot, your child's doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Do not remove the cap or cover until ready to use.
- Wash hands before and after use.
- Do not shake.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, bruised, red, infected, hard, or scarred.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not rub the site where you give the shot.
- 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.

Prefilled syringes:

- If stored in a refrigerator, let this drug come to room temperature before using it. Leave it at room temperature for at least 30 minutes. Do not heat this drug.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Be sure you know what to do if you forget to give your child a dose.
- 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?

- 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 14 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 14 days, throw this drug away.
- 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 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

2025-06-02

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.

Sarilumab - Last updated on June 23, 2024

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center