PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Sodium Chloride

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

Afrin Saline Nasal Mist [OTC] [DSC]; Altachlore [OTC]; Altamist Spray [OTC]; Atrapro Dermal Spray; Ayr Nasal Mist Allergy/Sinus [OTC]; Ayr Saline Nasal Drops [OTC]; Ayr Saline Nasal Gel [OTC]; Ayr Saline Nasal Neti Rinse [OTC]; Ayr Saline Nasal No-Drip [OTC]; AYR Saline Nasal Rinse [OTC]; Ayr Saline Nasal [OTC]; Ayr [OTC]; Baby Ayr Saline [OTC]; Deep Sea Nasal Spray [OTC]; HyperSal; Muro 128 [OTC]; Nasal Moist [OTC]; Nasal Moisturizing Spray [OTC]; Nebusal; Ocean Complete Sinus Rinse [OTC]; Ocean for Kids [OTC]; Ocean Nasal Spray [OTC]; Ocean Ultra Saline Mist [OTC]; Pretz Irrigation [OTC]; Pretz Natur Moist Nasal Spray [OTC]; Pretz [OTC]; PulmoSal; Saline Mist Spray [OTC]; Saljet Rinse [OTC]; Saljet [OTC]; True Nasal Moisturizing [OTC]; Wound Wash Saline [OTC]

Brand Names: Canada

Addipak Sodium Chloride; Aquapak; Ballard Unit Dose

What is this drug used for?

Injection and tablet:

- It is used to treat low sodium levels.

Injection:

- It is used to treat fluid loss.
- It is used to mix with a drug that is given as a shot.

Flush:

- It is used to flush IV sets and access devices.

For use in the eye:

- It is used to lower swelling.

Liquid for breathing in:

- It is used to thin mucus so it can be taken from the body by coughing.
- It is used to mix with other drugs for use in a special machine (nebulizer).

All nose products:

- It is used to treat dry or irritated nose passages.
- It is used to thin fluid in the nose passages.

All skin products:

- It is used to clean wounds.

All products:

- 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?

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.

Injection and tablet:

- If your child has high sodium levels or swelling.

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.

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.

Injection and tablet:

- If your child is on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your child's doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

Injection:

- This drug may contain aluminum. There is a chance of aluminum toxicity if your child is on this drug for a long time. The risk is greater if your child has kidney problems. The risk is also higher in premature infants. Talk with the

doctor.

All eye products:

- Have your child use care when doing tasks that call for clear eyesight.

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:

All products:

- 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.

Injection and tablet:

- Signs of electrolyte problems like mood changes; confusion; muscle pain, cramps, or spasms; weakness; shakiness; change in balance; an abnormal heartbeat; seizures; loss of appetite; or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.

Injection:

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Fever or chills.
- Shakiness.
- Chest pain or pressure or a fast heartbeat.
- Flushing.

- Burning, stinging, or redness where this drug goes into the body.
- Pain and irritation where this drug goes into the body.

All eye products:

- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.

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 eye products:

- Burning.
- Eye irritation.

Tablets:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.

All nose products:

- Nose irritation.

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.

Tablets:

- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- You may dissolve the tablet in water and have your child drink.

Injection:

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

Liquid for breathing in:

- Your child will use by breathing in from the mouth with a special machine (nebulizer). Your child's doctor will teach you the right way to use.

All nose products:

- Do not give this drug by mouth. Use in your child's nose only. Keep out of your child's mouth and eyes (may burn).

All skin products:

- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Clean affected part before use. Make sure to dry well.

All eye products:

- For the eye only.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Have your child take out contact lenses before using this drug. Lenses may be put back in 15 minutes after this drug is given. Do not put lenses back in if your child's eyes are irritated or infected.
- Do not touch the container tip to your child's eye, lid, or other skin. This could lead to bacteria in the drug, which may cause severe eye problems or loss of eyesight.

Eye drops:

- Tilt your child's head back and drop drug into the eye.
- Gently press the skin under the lower eyelid and pull the lower eyelid away from the eye slightly until you can see a small pouch.
- After giving this drug, ask your child to keep eyes closed. Put light pressure on the inside corner of the eye. Do this for 1 to 2 minutes. This keeps the drug in your child's eye.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.

Eye ointment:

- Gently pull down the lower lid and squeeze in how much the doctor told you to use.
- Let go of the lower eyelid and have your child keep eyes closed for 1 to 2 minutes.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Injection and flush:

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

All other products:

- If your child uses 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 used on an as needed basis. Do not use more often than told by the doctor.

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

Injection and flush:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All other products:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Protect from heat.

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 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

2026-02-24

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.

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