MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Thioridazine

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.

Warning

- An unsafe heartbeat that is not normal (long QT on ECG) has happened with this drug. Sudden deaths have rarely happened in people taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug must only be used when other drugs cannot be used or have not worked. Talk with your child's doctor to be sure that the benefits of this drug are more than the risks.
- There is a higher chance of death in older adults who take this drug for mental problems caused by dementia. Most of the deaths were linked to heart disease or infection. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- 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 any of these health problems: Long QTc on ECG or other heartbeat that is not normal, slow heartbeat, or low potassium or magnesium levels.
- If your child is very sleepy.
- If your child has recently drunk a lot of alcohol or taken a big amount of drugs that may slow your child's actions like phenobarbital or some pain drugs like oxycodone.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, paroxetine, pindolol, or propranolol.
- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

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 your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see

how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of infection. Rarely, infections have been deadly. Tell the doctor if your child has ever had a low white blood cell count. Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Have your child's blood work checked and an ECG (to see how your child's heart beats) as you have been told by the doctor.
- Have your child be careful in hot weather or while your child is being active. Have your child drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling, which can cause broken bones or other health problems.
- If your child will be near phosphorous insecticides, talk with your child's doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to side effects or withdrawal in the newborn.
- 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.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Feeling confused.
- Mood changes.
- Seizures.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.
- Change in eyesight.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Restlessness.
- Pale skin.
- Enlarged breasts or nipple discharge.
- Some people may get a severe muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This problem may lessen or go away after stopping this drug, but it may not go away. The risk is greater with diabetes and in older adults, especially older females. The risk is greater with longer use or higher doses, but it may also

occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements or problems with the tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) may happen. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or is sweating a lot.

If your child has menstrual periods:

- Period (menstrual) changes.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Sex problems like lowered interest in sex or ejaculation problems.

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:

- Constipation, diarrhea, throwing up, or upset stomach.
- Dry mouth.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Stuffy nose.

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.

- 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.

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.

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

- Store at room temperature protected from light. 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.
- 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.

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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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