



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Norethindrone

This information from Lexicomp® 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

Aygestin; Camila; Deblitane; Errin; Heather; Incassia; Jencycla; Jolivette [DSC]; Lyza; Nor-QD [DSC]; Nora-BE; Norlyda; Norlyroc; Ortho Micronor; Sharobel; Tulana

Brand Names: Canada

Jencycla; Micronor; Movisse; Norlutate

Warning

- Smoking cigarettes while using this drug raises the chance of very bad heart and blood-related side effects. This chance is raised with age (mainly in women older than 35 years of age). It is also raised with the number of cigarettes smoked. It is strongly advised not to smoke.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent pregnancy.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT):

- If your child has been given this form of this drug, talk with the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about giving this drug to your child.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child

takes this drug?

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child has had any of these health problems: Bleeding disorder; blood clots or risk of having a blood clot; breast cancer; cancer of the uterus, ovary, cervix, or vagina; liver disease; liver tumors; recent heart attack; recent stroke; or vaginal bleeding where the cause is not known.

If your child is pregnant:

- Do not give this drug to your child if she is 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 for your child to take this drug with all of his/her 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.
- This drug may raise the chance of blood clots, a stroke, or a heart attack. Talk with the doctor.
- Some studies have shown the risk of breast cancer is raised in women taking birth control pills, especially at a younger age. This includes birth control pills that have drugs like this one in them. The risk was also linked to how long the birth control pills were taken. One study showed the risk of breast cancer was also raised in women who took birth control pills within the past 10 years. Talk with the doctor.

- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch his/her blood sugar closely.
- Be sure that your child has regular breast exams and gynecology check-ups. The doctor will tell you how often your child needs to have these. Your child will also need to do breast self-exams as the doctor has told you. 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.
- Certain drugs, herbal products, or health problems could cause this drug to not work as well. Be sure the doctor knows about all of your child's drugs and health problems.
- Do not use in children who have not had their first menstrual period.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through having sex. Be sure your child does not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child has any signs of pregnancy or if she has a positive pregnancy test, call the doctor right away.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to 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.

- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Very bad headache.
- Stomach pain.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Bulging eyes.
- Change in eyesight.
- Loss of eyesight.
- A lump in the breast, breast pain or soreness, or nipple discharge.
- Breast pain.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Vaginal bleeding that is not normal.
- Low mood (depression).
- Mood changes.
- Swelling.
- Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.

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:

- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.

- Cramps.
- Bloating.
- Dizziness.
- Tender breasts.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Pimples (acne).
- Weight gain.
- Period (menstrual) changes. These include spotting or bleeding between cycles.
- This drug may cause dark patches of skin on your child's face. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects him/her from the sun.

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.

- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Do not skip doses, even if your child does not have sex or does not have sex very often.
- If your child throws up or has diarrhea, this drug may not work as well. Your child needs to use an extra form of birth control, like condoms, until you check with the doctor.
- If your child misses 2 periods in a row, have your child take a pregnancy test before starting a new dosing cycle.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- If a dose is missed, check the package insert or call the doctor to find out what to do. If using this drug to prevent pregnancy, another form of birth control may need to be used for some time to prevent pregnancy.

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

- Store at room temperature.
- 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.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- 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.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the

knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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