Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ruxolitinib (Systemic

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

Jakafi

Brand Names: Canada

Jakavi

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat myelofibrosis.
- It is used to treat polycythemia vera.
- It is used to treat graft-versus-host disease (GVHD).

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have an infection.
- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If you have any of these health problems: Low white blood cell count, low platelet count, or low red blood cell count.
- If you are taking fluconazole.

- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- If you have had TB (tuberculosis) or have been close to someone who has TB, talk with your doctor.
- Have your blood work and skin checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- Some patients have had severe health problems after stopping this drug. Do not stop taking this drug without calling your doctor. Call your doctor right away if you stop this drug and you have a fever, trouble breathing, signs of low blood pressure like severe dizziness or passing out, or any bruising or bleeding. Call your doctor right away if you stop this drug and you have signs of organ problems like a change in how much urine is passed, dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes. You may need to start taking this drug again.

- Treatment with this drug may lead to higher cholesterol and triglycerides. The effect of these changes on heart health is not known. Talk with the doctor.
- Some viral infections like herpes zoster (shingles) and herpes simplex have become active again with this drug. Tell your doctor if you have ever had a viral infection like herpes zoster or herpes simplex. Talk with your doctor.
- Drugs like this one taken by mouth to treat inflammatory health problems may raise the risk of heart attack, stroke, blood clots, and death. This includes sudden death from heart disease. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you smoke, have smoked in the past, or have ever had a heart attack, other heart problems, stroke, or blood clot.
- Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have signs of heart attack or stroke. This includes chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, dizziness or passing out, severe headache, weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in eyesight or balance, or drooping on 1 side of the face.
- Call your doctor right away if you have 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.
- Lymphoma and other types of cancer have happened in people taking drugs like this one by mouth to treat inflammatory health problems. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my 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 doctor or get medical help right away if you have 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 infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- 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.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Painful skin rash with blisters.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Shortness of breath.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Swelling.
- A severe brain problem called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) has happened with this drug. It may cause disability or can be deadly. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs

like confusion, memory problems, depression, change in the way you act, change in strength on 1 side is greater than the other, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, or change in eyesight.

- Certain types of skin cancer have happened in people taking this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have a change in color or size of a mole, or any new or changing skin lump or growth.

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 doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Dizziness or headache.
- Muscle spasm.
- Muscle pain.
- Weight gain.
- Gas.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

- Take with or without food.
- Those who have feeding tubes may also use the tablet. Mix each tablet with 40 mL of water. Stir for 10 minutes. Give within 6 hours of mixing. Flush the feeding tube with water before and after this drug is given.
- If you are on dialysis and are taking this drug on the day you get dialysis, take it after your dialysis. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Store at room temperature 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 symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your 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

2023-02-16

Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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

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

Ruxolitinib (Systemic - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center