



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Spironolactone

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**

Aldactone; CaroSpir

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Aldactone

### **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to get rid of extra fluid.
- It is used to raise potassium stores in the body.
- It is used to treat heart failure (weak heart).
- It is used to treat high blood pressure.
- It is used to treat some people with high aldosterone levels.
- It is used to treat some kidney problems.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

### **What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this**

## drug?

- If you have an allergy to spironolactone or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: Addison's disease or high potassium levels.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Amiloride, eplerenone, or triamterene.

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.

- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- Have your blood pressure checked often. Talk with your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- If you are on a low-salt or salt-free diet, talk with your doctor.
- Sometimes elements (potassium) in the blood may be raised with this drug. This can be deadly if it is not treated. The chance is greatest in people with high blood sugar (diabetes), kidney disease, very bad illness, and/or in older adults. Your doctor will follow you closely to change the dose to match your body's needs.
- If you are taking a salt substitute that has potassium in it, a potassium-sparing diuretic, or a potassium product, talk with your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol or use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- This drug may affect how much of some other drugs are in your body. If you are taking other drugs, talk with your

doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while taking this drug with your other drugs.

- 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.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

### **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 fluid and electrolyte problems like mood changes, confusion, muscle pain or weakness, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, very bad dizziness or passing out, fast heartbeat, more thirst, seizures, feeling very tired or weak, not hungry, unable to pass urine or change in the amount of urine produced, dry mouth, dry eyes, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.

- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of a very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Feeling confused.
- Change in balance.
- Lowered interest in sex.
- Not able to get or keep an erection.
- Fever or chills.
- Sore throat.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Period (menstrual) changes.
- Breast pain.
- For males, enlarged breasts.
- Liver problems have rarely happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your doctor right

away if you have 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.

### **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.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Dizziness.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach cramps.
- Hair loss.

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.

### **How is this drug best taken?**

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

### **All products:**

- Take with or without food but take the same way each time. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- This drug may cause you to pass urine more often. To keep from having sleep problems, try to take before 6 PM.

### **Liquid (suspension):**

- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next 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.
- 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 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.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting 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 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.

### **Last Reviewed Date**

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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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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