Terbutaline

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: Canada
Bricanyl Turbuhaler

Warning

Injection and tablet:

- Very bad and sometimes deadly side effects, like fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, high blood sugar, low potassium, fluid in the lungs, or heart attack, have happened when this drug was given to pregnant women. It may also cause fast heartbeat or low blood sugar in the fetus or newborn if given to a pregnant woman. This drug is not approved to treat or prevent premature labor. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to open the airways in lung diseases where spasm may cause breathing 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 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 a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
• If you are in preterm labor or are having a miscarriage.

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?

For all patients taking this drug:
• Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
• Call your doctor right away if your normal dose does not work well, if your signs get worse, or if you need to use this drug more often than normal.
• Talk with your doctor before using any other drugs or inhalers for breathing.
• If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor. This drug may raise blood sugar.
• Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
• If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
• Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

Children:

• Different forms of this drug may be for use in different ages of children. Talk with the doctor before giving this drug to a child.

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:

**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.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, more thirst, more hungry, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Seizures.

**Inhaler (powder):**

- This drug can cause very bad breathing problems right after you take a dose. Sometimes, this may be life-threatening. If you have trouble breathing, breathing that is worse, wheezing, or coughing after using this drug, use a rescue inhaler and get medical help right away.

**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:

**All products:**

- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Shakiness.
- Restlessness.
- Headache.

**Injection and tablet:**

- Feeling dizzy or sleepy.

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](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.

**Tablets:**

- Take with or without food.

**Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin.

**Inhaler (powder):**

- For breathing into the lungs.
• Rinse out mouth after each use. Do not swallow the rinse water. Spit it out.
• Do not breathe out into the inhaler. Put the cap back on after you use your dose.
• Clean mouthpiece by wiping with a dry tissue or cloth. Do not wash or put in water.
• If you are using more than 1 inhaled drug, ask the doctor which drug to use first.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Tablets:

• 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.

Inhaler (powder):

• If you use this drug on a regular basis, use 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 use 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.

Injection:

• Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

Injection:
If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your 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.

**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 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 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**
2020-09-16

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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.