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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Tetracycline (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: Canada

Apo-Tetra; Nu-Tetra

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat pimples (acne).
- It is used to treat bacterial infections.

## 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 is taking any of these drugs: Acitretin, isotretinoin, or a penicillin.

## If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby.

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.
- Have your child's blood work checked if he/she is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.
- Your child may get sunburned more easily. 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.
- If your child is taking warfarin, talk with the doctor. Your child may need to have blood work checked more closely while taking it with this drug.
- This drug may cause a change in tooth color to yellow-gray-brown in children younger than 8 years old. If this change of tooth color happens, it will not go away. Talk with the doctor.
- Most of the time, this drug is not for use in children younger than 8 years old. However, there may be times when these children may need to take this drug. Talk with the doctor.

### **If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- Birth control pills and other hormone-based birth control may not work as well to prevent pregnancy. Be sure your child uses some other kind of birth control also, like a condom, when taking this drug.

### **If your child is pregnant:**

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy. If your child is pregnant or gets pregnant while taking this drug,

call the doctor right away.

## 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.
- Fever or chills.
- Sore throat.
- Throat irritation.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Very bad headache.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Joint pain.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- It is common to have diarrhea when taking antibiotics. Rarely, a severe form of diarrhea called C diff-associated diarrhea (CDAD) may happen. Sometimes, this has led to a deadly bowel problem (colitis). CDAD may happen while your child is taking an antibiotic or within a few months after he/she stops taking it. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has stomach pain or cramps, very loose or watery stools, or bloody stools. Do not try to treat diarrhea without first checking with the doctor.

- Raised pressure in the brain has happened with this drug. Most of the time, this will go back to normal after this drug is stopped. Sometimes, loss of eyesight may happen and may not go away even after this drug is stopped. Call the doctor right away if your child has a headache or eyesight problems like blurred eyesight, seeing double, or loss of eyesight.

## **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:

- Not hungry.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Diarrhea.

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.

- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.
- 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.
- Give on an empty stomach.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids every day unless told to drink less liquid by your child's doctor.
- Do not give your child products that have iron, zinc, or sodium bicarbonate in them or products like antacids that have aluminum, calcium, or magnesium in them at the same time as this drug. Talk with the doctor or pharmacist.

- Do not let your child eat or drink dairy products or give your child calcium at the same time as this drug. They may make this drug not work as well. If you have questions, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.

## **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.
- Protect from light.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Throw away any unused part of this drug.
- 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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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