

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ziprasidone

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

Geodon

Brand Names: Canada

Auro-Ziprasidone; Zeldox

Warning

- There is a higher chance of death in older adults who take this drug for mental problems caused by dementia. Most of the deaths were linked to heart disease or infection. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat bipolar problems.
- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor **BEFORE** my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has ever had a long QT on ECG or other heartbeat that is not normal.
- If your child has had a recent heart attack.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Low potassium levels, low magnesium levels, or a weak heart (heart failure).
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Amiodarone, arsenic, chlorpromazine, disopyramide, dofetilide, dolasetron, dronedarone, droperidol, gatifloxacin, halofantrine, ibutilide, levomethadyl, mefloquine, mesoridazine, moxifloxacin, pentamidine, pimozone, probucol, procainamide, quinidine, sotalol, sparfloxacin, tacrolimus, or thioridazine.
- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

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 to give this drug with all of your child's other 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 blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- High blood sugar or diabetes, high cholesterol, and weight gain have happened with drugs like this one. These may raise the chance of heart and brain blood vessel disease.
- Have your child's blood sugar checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down.

Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.

- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.
- Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids every day unless told to drink less liquid by your child's doctor.
- Have your child be careful in hot weather or while your child is being active. Have your child drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling, which can cause broken bones or other health problems.
- A severe and sometimes deadly reaction has happened. Most of the time, this reaction has signs like fever, rash, or swollen glands with problems in body organs like the liver, kidney, blood, heart, muscles and joints, or lungs. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- An unsafe heartbeat that is not normal (long QT on ECG) has happened with this drug. This may raise the chance of sudden death. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect being able to get pregnant. This effect

goes back to normal when the drug is stopped. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.
- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to uncontrolled muscle movements and withdrawal in the newborn.

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 high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, more thirst, more hungry, passing urine more often, flushing, fast

breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.

- Mental, mood, or behavior changes that are new or worse.
- If your child has thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Seizures.
- Change in eyesight.
- Enlarged breasts, nipple discharge, not able to get or keep an erection (in males), or period (menstrual) changes (in females).
- A very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause very bad health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of infection. Rarely, infections have been deadly. Tell the doctor if your child has ever had a low white blood cell count. Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or

sore throat.

- Some people may get a severe muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This problem may lessen or go away after stopping this drug, but it may not go away. The risk is greater with diabetes and in older adults, especially older women. The risk is greater with longer use or higher doses, but it may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements or problems with his/her tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.
- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) may happen. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or is sweating a lot.
- Call your child's doctor right away if your child gets a painful erection (hard penis) or gets an erection that lasts for longer than 4 hours. If this is not treated right away, it may lead to lasting sex problems and your child may not be able to have sex in the future.

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:

All products:

- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Restlessness.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Anxiety.
- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Dry mouth.
- Headache.
- Cough.
- Runny nose.
- Weight gain.

Injection:

- Irritation where this drug is given.

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.

Capsules:

- It may take a few weeks to see the full effect.
- Give this drug with food.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Give this drug at the same time of day.
- 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.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Capsules:

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it, with food.
- 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.

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

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

Capsules:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

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 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.
- 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2020-02-25

Copyright

© 2020 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Ziprasidone - Last updated on October 25, 2020

©2020 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center