Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ketoconazole (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-Ketoconazole; Ketoconazole-200; TEVA-Ketoconazole

Warning

- This drug is not for use to treat certain types of fungal infections. This includes fungal infections of the skin, nails, or brain. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug must only be used when other drugs cannot be used or have not worked. Talk with your doctor to be sure that the benefits of this drug are more than the risks.
- Severe and sometimes deadly liver problems like the need for a liver transplant have happened with this drug. Some people did not have a raised chance of liver problems before taking this drug. Most of the time, but not always, liver problems have gone back to normal after this drug was stopped. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes. Blood tests will be needed to watch for any liver problems. Talk with your doctor.
- Taking this drug with certain other drugs may raise the chance of very bad and sometimes deadly heart problems like a heartbeat that is not normal. Do not take this drug if you are taking any of these drugs: Cisapride, disopyramide, dofetilide, dronedarone, methadone, pimozide, quinidine, or ranolazine.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat fungal infections.
- 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 liver disease.
- If you take any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug, like certain drugs that are used for high cholesterol, migraines, or mood problems. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

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.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not use longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- This drug may lower testosterone levels. This may cause enlarged breasts, not able to get an erection, or low sperm counts. Testosterone

levels go back to normal after this drug is stopped. Call the doctor if any of these effects occur.

- 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 a weak adrenal gland like a severe upset stomach or throwing up, severe dizziness or passing out, muscle weakness, feeling very tired, mood changes, decreased appetite, or weight loss.
- Dizziness.
- Chest pain.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Enlarged breasts.
- If bright lights bother your eyes.
- Change in tongue color.
- Period (menstrual) changes.
- Fever or chills.
- Muscle pain or weakness.

- A type of abnormal heartbeat (prolonged QT interval) can happen with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have a fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, or if you pass out.

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:

- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Upset stomach.
- Headache.

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.

- Talk with your doctor if you are also taking antacids, cimetidine, dexlansoprazole, esomeprazole, famotidine, lansoprazole, nizatidine, omeprazole, pantoprazole, rabeprazole, or ranitidine. You may need to take this drug with an acidic drink like non-diet cola.
- If you take antacids, take this drug at least 2 hours before you take the antacids.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.

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 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.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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

2020-06-15

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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.

Ketoconazole (Systemic - Last updated on December 12, 2022
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