Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Metronidazole and Nystatin

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

Flagystatin

### Warning

- Some people with Cockayne syndrome have had liver problems with the oral or injection forms of metronidazole. Sometimes, this has been deadly. If you have Cockayne syndrome, talk with your doctor.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat vaginal infections. If this drug has been given for some other reason, talk with the doctor for more information.

## 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 are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are in the first trimester of pregnancy.

- 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.
- Metronidazole has been shown to cause cancer in mice and rats with long-term use. Talk with the doctor.
- The doctor has given you this drug for a certain health problem. Do not use this drug for other health problems.
- Do not use longer than you have been told by the doctor.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert or have clear eyesight until you see how this drug affects you.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug and for at least 1 day after the last dose. Drinking alcohol or taking products that have alcohol may cause flushing, throwing up, or fast heartbeat.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may darken the urine. This is normal and not harmful.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- This drug may raise the chance of a severe brain problem called aseptic meningitis. Call your doctor right away if you have a headache, fever,

chills, very upset stomach or throwing up, stiff neck, rash, bright lights bother your eyes, feeling sleepy, or feeling confused.

- If a sexual partner has signs of infection too, the partner may need to be treated too. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not douche or use other vaginal products like tampons while you are using this drug. You may need to avoid these things for some time after the last dose. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- Condoms or diaphragms may not work to prevent pregnancy. Use some other kind of birth control while taking this drug.
- 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.
- Do not use the applicator if you are more than 7 months 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 liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or suicide.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Ringing in the ears, hearing loss, or any other changes in hearing.

- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in your mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.
- Nervous system problems have happened with the oral and injection forms of this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal; change in balance or eyesight; dizziness or passing out; headache; not able to sleep; seizures; or trouble speaking. Call your doctor right away if you feel confused, depressed, irritable, tired, or weak.
- Rarely, low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have any unexplained bruising or bleeding; signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; or feel very tired or weak.

## 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:

- Vaginal irritation.
- Burning.
- Bad taste in your mouth.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Constipation.
- Dry mouth.
- Trouble sleeping.

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.

- Do not take this drug by mouth. For vaginal use only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- Wash your hands and applicator after use.
- Use as you have been told, even if your signs get better.
- Do not stop using this drug during your menstrual period.

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

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

- Store at room temperature protected from light. 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.
- 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 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.

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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.

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