Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Potassium Chloride

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

K-Tab; Klor-Con; Klor-Con 10; Klor-Con M10; Klor-Con M15; Klor-Con M20; Klor-Con Sprinkle [DSC]; Pokonza

Brand Names: Canada

APO-K; Micro-K

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent low potassium levels.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- 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 high potassium levels.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Amiloride, eplerenone, spironolactone, or triamterene.

Tablets and capsules:

- If you have any of these health problems: A bowel block, slow-moving GI (gastrointestinal) tract, or slow stomach clearing.
- If you have heart disease with esophagus problems.
- If you take other drugs called anticholinergics, like ipratropium or oxybutynin. Ask your doctor if you are not sure if any of your drugs are anticholinergic.

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 take more than what your doctor told you to take. Taking more than you are told may raise your chance of very bad side effects.
- If your diet has low-salt foods or you are taking a salt substitute, talk with your doctor.
- Some products are not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.
- 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.

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 potassium levels like a heartbeat that does not feel normal; feeling confused; feeling weak, lightheaded, or dizzy; feeling like passing out; numbness or tingling; or shortness of breath.
- Slow heartbeat.
- Chest pain or pressure.

Tablets and capsules:

- Signs of bowel problems like black, tarry, or bloody stools; fever; mucus in the stools; throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds; or very bad stomach pain, constipation, or diarrhea.
- Swelling of belly.

Injection:

- Signs of low sodium levels like headache, trouble focusing, memory problems, feeling confused, weakness, seizures, or change in balance.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.

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 oral products:

- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Gas.

Tablets:

- Some products of potassium are in a wax matrix; you may see this in stool. The potassium has been taken into the body, but the wax has not.

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.

Tablets and capsules:

- Take with or right after a meal.
- Take with a full glass of water.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Do not suck on this product.

- If you have trouble swallowing, talk with your doctor.

Capsules:

- You may sprinkle contents of capsule on applesauce or other soft food. Do not chew. Swallow right away and follow with water or juice.
- Do not mix with hot food.
- After mixing, take your dose right away. Do not store for future use.

Tablets:

- Some products may be broken in half or the whole tablet may be mixed with a $^1/_2$ cup of water. Check with your doctor to see if you can take your product this way. If you can mix your product with water, drink the mixture right away. Rinse cup with more water and drink. Rinse again and drink to be sure all the drug is taken.
- Swallow the mixture right away. Do not store for use at a later time.

Liquid or powder:

- Take with or right after a meal.
- Mix with water as you have been told before drinking.
- Drink slowly.
- Do not keep the mixture to use later.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

All oral products:

- 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.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

All oral products:

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

Liquid or powder:

- Do not freeze.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your 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 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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