

Levetiracetam

Your child needs to take the medicine called levetiracetam (say: lee-va-tye-RA-se-tam). This information sheet explains what levetiracetam does, how to give it, and what side effects or problems your child may have when he or she takes this medicine.

What is levetiracetam?

Levetiracetam is a medicine used to treat seizure disorders. It is used to reduce the number of seizures your child may have.

You may hear levetiracetam called by its brand name, Keppra®. Levetiracetam comes in a tablet form and also can be made as a liquid by certain pharmacies.

Before giving levetiracetam to your child...

Tell the doctor if your child is allergic to levetiracetam or any components in the formulation.

Talk with the doctor or pharmacist if your child has the following condition. Precautions may need to be taken with this medicine if your child has:

- kidney problems

How should you give your child levetiracetam?

- The tablets should be swallowed whole. If you need to, you may split the tablet and mix it with water for administration. It can be given with or without food. Give it with food or milk if it causes an upset stomach.
- If your child is taking liquid levetiracetam, measure out each dose with the special

spoon, dropper or syringe that the pharmacist gave you.

- Give this medicine at the same time each day. Pick times that are easy for you to remember so you do not miss doses.
- Give your child levetiracetam exactly as your doctor or pharmacist tells you.
- Do not increase or decrease the amount of medicine without speaking with your child's doctor first.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you stop giving this medicine for any reason.
- This medicine should not be stopped suddenly because your child's seizures may return or start to occur more often.

What should you do if your child misses a dose of levetiracetam?

- Give the missed dose as soon as you remember.
- If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose. Give the next dose at the regular time.
- Do not give your child 2 doses to make up for 1 missed dose.

How long does levetiracetam take to work?

Your child may have to take levetiracetam for several weeks before you start to notice a reduction in the number of seizures he or she has. If there is no reduction in the number of seizures in several weeks, contact their healthcare provider.

What are the possible side effects of levetiracetam?

Your child may have some of these side effects while he or she takes levetiracetam. Check with your child's doctor if your child continues to have any of these side effects and they do not go away, or they bother your child:

- feeling sleepy
- weakness
- dizziness

Call your child's doctor during office hours if your child has any of these side effects:

- easy bruising
- clumsiness or unsteadiness
- loss of memory
- changes in mood (more angry, sad, or nervous)
- increase in seizures

Most of the following side effects are not common, but they may be a sign of a serious problem. Call your child's doctor right away or take your child to Emergency if your child has any of these side effects:

- swelling of the face, lips, or tongue
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- rash or hives (red raised spots on the skin)

What safety measures should you take when your child is using levetiracetam?

Do not stop giving your child levetiracetam suddenly, because your child's seizures may increase. The doctor may want to slowly reduce the dose before stopping it completely.

Levetiracetam may make your child dizzy, drowsy, or less alert than normal, especially at the beginning of therapy. Have your child avoid tasks or activities that require alertness until you see how this medicine affects him or her. Your child's teacher should also know that he or she is taking medication with these effects.

Girls taking the birth control pill should report irregular periods or increased spotting to their doctor.

There are some medicines that should not be taken together with levetiracetam. It is important that you tell your doctor and pharmacist if your child takes any other medications (prescription, over the counter, or herbal). Some medicines cause drowsiness and the dose of these medications may have to be adjusted when taken with levetiracetam. Examples include certain cold medicines, sleeping medicines, and other medications used to treat seizures.

What other important information should you know about levetiracetam?

Keep a list of all medications your child is on to show the doctor or pharmacist.

Do not share your child's medicine with others. Do not give anyone else's medicine to your child.

Make sure you always have enough levetiracetam to last through weekends, holidays, and vacations. Call your pharmacy at least 2 days before your child runs out of medicine to order refills.

Keep levetiracetam at room temperature in a dry place away from sunlight. Do NOT store it in the bathroom or kitchen.

Do not keep any medicines that are out of date. Check with your pharmacist about the best way to throw away outdated or leftover medicines.

Keep levetiracetam out of your child's sight and reach and locked up in a safe place. If your child takes too much levetiracetam, call the Ontario Poison Centre at one of these numbers. These calls are free.

- Call 416-813-5900 if you live in Toronto.

- Call 1-800-268-9017 if you live somewhere else in Ontario.
- If you live outside of Ontario, call your local Poison Information Centre.

Disclaimer: The information in this Family Med-aid is accurate at the time of printing. It provides a summary of information about levetiracetam and does not contain all possible information about this medicine. Not all side effects are listed. If you have any questions or want more information about levetiracetam, speak to your healthcare provider.

