

AMIODARONE

Brand Names

- Cordarone;
- Nexterone;
- Pacerone

Warning

- This drug is only used to treat heartbeats that are not normal and that may be deadly. It may cause very bad and sometimes deadly side effects like lung, thyroid, or liver problems. This drug can also cause the heartbeats that are not normal to get worse. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug will be started in a hospital where you will be closely watched. Talk with your doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat heartbeats that are not normal.
- 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 have an allergy to amiodarone, iodine, or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: Heart block, shock caused by heart problems, or slow heartbeat.
- If you are 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 your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- 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.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly over a few minutes when sitting or lying down. Be careful climbing stairs.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- You will need an ECG before starting this drug and during treatment. Talk with your doctor.
- Low blood pressure has happened with this drug. Sometimes this has been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your heart and lung function checked. Talk with your doctor.
- Have an eye exam as you have been told by your doctor.
- Slow heartbeat and the need to get a pacemaker have happened when amiodarone was given with sofosbuvir and certain other hepatitis C drugs. Sometimes, this has been deadly. If you also take drugs for hepatitis C, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may affect how much of some other drugs are in your body. If you are taking other drugs, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while taking this drug with your other drugs.
- If you have a defibrillator or pacemaker, talk with your doctor.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- If loose stools (diarrhea) or throwing up happens, you will need to make sure to avoid dehydration and electrolyte problems. Talk with the doctor.
- A very bad eye problem has rarely happened with this drug. This may lead to a change in eyesight and sometimes loss of eyesight, which may not come back. Talk with the doctor.
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- This drug stays in your body for weeks or months even after you stop it. Before you start taking other drugs, be sure to tell your doctor and pharmacist that you have taken this drug.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about?

- **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 or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
 - Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

- Signs of lung or breathing problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough, or fever.
- Signs of thyroid problems like a change in weight without trying, feeling nervous and excitable, feeling restless, feeling very weak, hair thinning, low mood (depression), neck swelling, not able to focus, not able to handle heat or cold, period (menstrual) changes, shakiness, or sweating.
- Change in balance.
- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Blue or gray skin color.
- Coughing up blood.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Fast or slow heartbeat.
- A new or worse heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or very bad eye irritation.
- If bright lights bother your eyes.
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Joint pain.
- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, swelling in the arms or legs.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- 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 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.

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:
- Hard stools (constipation).
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Not hungry.
- 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.

How is this drug best taken?

- Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take with or without food. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- If you take cholestyramine, talk with your pharmacist about how to take it with this drug.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- **Tablet:**
- 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?

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect 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.
- Check with your pharmacist about how to throw out unused drugs.

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.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.
- 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.

