

Cephalexin

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Drug name

Cephalexin (Keflex, Keftabs, Biocef)

Drug Uses

Cephalexin is used to treat infections, caused by bacteria that are susceptible to the effects of cephalexin. Common infections that are treated with cephalexin include infections of the middle ear, tonsils, throat, larynx (laryngitis), bronchi (bronchitis) and pneumonia. It also is used for treating urinary tract, skin and bone infections.

How Taken

The dose of cephalexin for adults is 1 to 4 grams in divided doses. Children are treated with 25-100 mg/kg/day in divided doses.

Drug Class and Mechanism

Cephalexin belongs to a class of antibiotics, called cephalosporins. They are similar to penicillin in action and side effects. They stop or slow the growth of bacterial cells by preventing bacteria from forming the cell wall that surrounds each cell. The cell wall protects bacteria from the external environment and keeps the contents of the cell together. Without a cell wall, bacteria are not able to survive. Bacteria that are susceptible to cephalexin include *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *E. coli* and several others.

Missed Dose

Do not miss any doses. If you miss a dose of this medicine, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not take 2 doses at once.

Storage

Tablets and capsules should be stored at room temperature. Suspensions should be refrigerated and discarded after 14 days.

Warnings Precautions

Do not take this medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to it or are allergic to any ingredient in this product. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to a cephalosporin antibiotic (such as Ceclor, Keflex, Cefitin, Duricef) or a penicillin antibiotic (such as amoxicillin or ampicillin), contact your doctor or pharmacist before taking this medicine. A severe reaction includes a severe rash, hives, breathing difficulties, or dizziness. If you have a question about whether you are allergic to this medicine, or if a certain medicine is a cephalosporin or penicillin, contact your doctor or pharmacist. If you experience difficulty breathing or tightness of chest; swelling of eye-lids, face, or lips; or develop a rash or hives, tell your doctor immediately. Do not take any more of this medicine unless your doctor tells you to do so. If your symptoms do not improve within a few days, or if they become worse, check with your doctor. This medicine may affect certain lab test results. Make sure laboratory personnel and your doctors know you use this medicine. This medicine may cause dizziness. Do not drive, operate machinery, or do anything else that could be dangerous until you know how you react to this medicine. Using this medicine alone with other medicines, or with alcohol may lessen your ability to drive or to perform other potentially dangerous tasks. If moderate to severe diarrhea occurs during or after treatment with this medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist. Do not treat it with non-prescription (over-the-counter) medicines. Before you begin taking any new medicine, either prescription or over-the-counter, check with your doctor or pharmacist. Caution should be used in the elderly since they may be more sensitive to the effects of this drug. For women: if you plan on becoming pregnant, discuss with your doctor the benefits and risks of using this medicine during pregnancy. This medicine is excreted in breast milk. If you are or will be breast-feeding while you are using this medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist to discuss the risks to your baby. If you have diabetes, this medicine may cause false test results with some urine glucose tests. Check with your doctor before you adjust the dose of your diabetes medicine or change your diet.

Possible Side Effects

Side effects that may occur while taking this medicine include dizziness, tiredness, headache, mild diarrhea, or stomach upset. If they continue or are bothersome, check with your doctor. Check with your doctor as soon as possible if you experience vaginal irritation or discharge, mood or mental changes, or joint pain. Contact your doctor immediately if you experience seizures; yellowing of the eyes or skin; red, blistered, swollen or peeling skin; unusual bruising or bleeding; decreased urination; severe stomach pain or cramps; confusion; or bloody or severe diarrhea. An allergic reaction to this medicine is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, or trouble breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

More Information

If your symptoms do not improve within a few days, or if they become worse, check with your doctor. Do not share this medicine with others for whom it was not prescribed. Do not use this medicine for other health conditions. Keep this medicine out of the reach of children.

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