



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Thalidomide (Thalomid®)

Thalidomide (tha LI doh mide) is the generic name for Thalomid® (THAL oh mid). This medicine is used to treat many different diseases. Some of them are cancer, graft-versus-host disease, Crohn's disease, and leprosy.

Warnings

- If your child is allergic to thalidomide, they **should not** take this medicine.
- This medicine may cause:
 - Blood clots, heart attack, or stroke
 - Increased risk of bleeding due to low blood count
 - Nerve damage, which may be permanent
 - Increased risk of infection
 - Serious skin reactions
 - Severe birth defects if taken during pregnancy.

When your child begins this medicine

- A certified THALOMID REMS™ counselor will talk to you and your child about the risks of using thalidomide.
- You will be given a Thalomid® Medication Guide with detailed information about taking thalidomide.
- Pharmacies, doctors, and patients must register with the company that makes thalidomide. Only certain pharmacies can dispense thalidomide. To find a pharmacy that has this medicine, call (888)-423-5436. Nationwide Children's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy is certified to dispense thalidomide, so you may have the prescriptions filled at our pharmacy.

How to give this medicine

- Read the label carefully and make sure you are giving your child the right dose. It is easy to confuse the many different dosage forms and strengths.
- Stay with your child until they have swallowed the dose of medicine.
- Wash and dry your hands before and after using the medicine.
- Do not open or crush the capsules.
- Wear gloves when giving the medicine to avoid touching the powder.
- Keep the capsules in the blister pack until it is time for your child to take the medicine.
- This medicine should be given on an empty stomach or wait for at least 1 hour after a meal to give the medicine. Bedtime is preferred.
- Give the medicine with a full glass of water.
- Your child should drink lots of liquids while taking this medicine, at least 6-8 glasses per day.
- It is very important to give the medicine every day as ordered, even if your child is feeling fine. Do not change doses or stop the medicine without talking to your child's doctor.
- This medicine is a hazardous chemical. When your child no longer needs it, it should be disposed of in a safe manner. Return the unused medicine to Celgene by calling 1-888-423-5436, or to your prescriber, or to the pharmacy that dispensed the medicine to you.

If you forget to give a dose

- If you forget to give a dose of this medicine, give it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, do not give the missed dose at all. Do not double the next dose. Instead, go back to your regular dosing schedule. If you have any questions about this, check with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

If a dose is vomited

- If the medicine is vomited (thrown up) after your child swallows the dose of medicine, do not repeat the dose. Some of the medicine may still be in the stomach. If the vomiting continues, call your child's doctor.

- If the medicine is vomited (thrown up) right after you give it and is not swallowed, wait 10 to 20 minutes. Then give the same size dose one more time.
- If the vomiting continues, call your child's doctor.

Medicine storage

- Store all medicine out of the reach of children.
- Always keep medicine in the original packaging from the pharmacy.
- Exposure to direct light (including sunlight), heat and moisture may make this medicine not work as well. Keep the package tightly closed and stored in a dark, dry place (not in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink) and away from heat.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the original packaging.

Drug – nutrient interactions

- This medicine should not be taken with certain foods, products, or medicines. Other products can cause side effects from thalidomide. Thalidomide can make other medicines not work or cause side effects of the other medicines.
- Tell your child's physician, pharmacist, and nurse about all the medicines your child takes. This is important for prescription medicines, inhalers, creams and ointments, herbal and natural medicines, and anything you buy over-the-counter for your child.
- Your child may have to stop getting vaccines while taking thalidomide. Thalidomide may prevent the body from reacting to vaccines the way it should. Ask your child's doctor when he or she can restart vaccines.
- Your child should not drink alcohol. Taking this medicine with alcohol can cause dizziness and drowsiness and can be dangerous. Some cold medicines, cough syrups and mouthwashes contain alcohol. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving over-the-counter medicines.
- If your child is taking any other medicine or herbal supplements, tell your doctor and pharmacist. Certain medicines should not be taken with thalidomide.
- Ask your doctor if it is all right to give a vitamin or mineral supplement.

Possible side effects

- Severe birth defect or death of an unborn baby if taken during pregnancy
- Drowsiness, weakness, fatigue, confusion
- Dizziness
- Constipation
- Tingling, numbness, pain, or burning feeling in the feet or hands
- Swelling or edema in the feet, ankles, and legs
- Allergic reaction (red, itchy skin rash; fever; fast heartbeat; trouble breathing or talking; swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat)
- Low blood counts
- Seizure

What to do about side effects

- If a skin rash occurs, stop giving the medicine and call your child's doctor.
- If your child feels dizzy, he should sit up for a few minutes before standing.
- If your child becomes drowsy or sleepy, do not let them ride a bike or operate machinery (such as a lawnmower or car), or take part in any activities where one must stay alert and awake.

When to call for emergency help

Call for emergency help if your child has any of these:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (trouble breathing, swelling of the tongue, swelling of hands, feet, or ankles)
- Signs of a blood clot (shortness of breath, chest pain, arm or leg swelling, pain in the lower leg)
- Seizures or tremors
- If your child passes out

When to call the doctor

Call your child's doctor if any of the following occurs:

- A red, itchy skin rash
- Burning, tingling or numbness of arms, hands, legs, or feet

- Fever, sore throat, ear infection, mouth sores, poor wound healing, painful urination
- Chest pain, fast or slow heartbeat
- Severe headaches, confusion, one-sided body weakness or drooping of face, eyesight, speech or balance problems
- Your child is having any side effects that continue or are very bothersome
- Your child is exposed to chickenpox or shingles
- Pregnancy

Preventive measures

- Blood counts will be done before the first dose is given and from time to time during treatment.
- Pregnancy tests will be taken:
 - 10 to 14 days before getting your thalidomide prescription
 - 24 hours before starting thalidomide
 - Every week during the first 4 weeks
 - Every 4 weeks in females with regular periods
 - Every 2 weeks in females with irregular periods
- If there is any chance that you can get pregnant, you must agree to use at least 1 highly effective method of birth control and at least 1 additionally effective method of birth control every time you have sex with a male starting at least 4 weeks before taking thalidomide

Miscellaneous

- Ask your pharmacist for two separately labeled packages of thalidomide if your daycare provider or school nurse will be giving this medicine.
- Your daycare provider or school nurse will need instructions on how to give this medicine and precautions to take.
- Ask your nurse for several copies of this Helping Hand (to give to your daycare provider or school nurse):
 - HH-V-37, *Safe Handling of Hazardous Medicine in the Home*.

Other advice about the medicine

- Tell your child's doctor and pharmacist if your child has a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- Take all of your child's medicines with you in the original package whenever your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room, or is admitted to the hospital.
- Learn the name, spelling, and dose of this medicine. Also, teach your child if he is old enough.
- If your child takes too much of this medicine, or if someone else takes this medicine, call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 614-228-2272). They will tell you what to do.
- The doctor has prescribed this medicine for your child only. **DO NOT SHARE THIS MEDICINE WITH ANYONE ELSE.**
- Your child must never donate blood while taking thalidomide.
- When your child goes to the dentist, be sure to tell the dentist that the child is taking this medicine and why.
- Tell your child's teacher, school nurse, coach, babysitter, and others that your child is taking this medicine and what side effects to watch for.

Follow-up appointments

- Your child's follow-up appointment is on (date)_____ at (time) _____.
- Expect to have regular follow-up appointments with your child's doctor.
- If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Questions to ask the doctor or pharmacist
