

Calcitriol (Rocaltrol®) and Hemodialysis

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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How do I store this medication?

- Store capsules:
 - › At room temperature (15 to 25 °C)
 - › Out of the reach of children and pets
 - › Away from moisture and light (like in a medicine cabinet)
- Store liquid:
 - › At room temperature (15 to 25 °C)
 - › Out of the reach of children and pets
 - › Away from sunlight

Calcitriol (Rocaltrol®) and Hemodialysis

What is calcitriol (Rocaltrol®)?

- Calcitriol is a form of vitamin D that your body can use. The brand name of this medication is Rocaltrol®.
- Calcitriol helps your body control your calcium and phosphate levels. Calcium and phosphate are needed to build healthy bones.
- This medication comes as a capsule (pill) or as a liquid.
 - › Capsules come in 0.25 mcg (microgram) or 0.5 mcg doses (amounts).
 - › The liquid comes in a 1 mcg/ml dose.

Why do I need to take this medication?

- People get vitamin D from sunlight, and from eating oily fish and milk products. People with kidney disease cannot change enough vitamin D into calcitriol.
- This can cause:
 - › Low calcium levels in the blood
 - › Weaker bones
- Calcitriol raises the amount of vitamin D that your body can use.

How do I take calcitriol?

- Take this medication exactly as your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) tells you.
- Do not stop taking calcitriol before talking with your primary health care provider.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you can. **If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take 2 doses at the same time.**
- This medication can be:
 - › Swallowed without chewing
 - › Taken with water
 - › Taken with or without food
- If your stomach feels upset after taking this medication, try taking it with food.

Are there any side effects?

Like all medications, calcitriol may cause side effects.

- **Common side effects are:**
 - › Nausea (upset stomach)
 - › Headaches
- **Less common side effects are:**
 - › Constipation (not being able to poop)
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › Loss of appetite (not feeling hungry)
 - › Trouble sleeping
 - › Drowsiness (feeling tired or sleepy)
 - › Peeing more than usual
 - › Dry mouth
 - › Muscle or bone pain
 - › Irregular heartbeat
 - › Red eyes