

## Pharmacy

### DRUG INFORMATION

# ABVD Regimen [Doxorubicin, Bleomycin, Vinblastine, Dacarbazine]



### What is ABVD Regimen?

- ABVD is a chemotherapy regimen consisting of four drugs (A-Doxorubicin, B-Bleomycin, V-Vinblastine and D-Dacarbazine) which is given for the treatment of Hodgkin lymphoma.

### How Is ABVD Administered?

- ABVD is given as separate injections into your vein (intravenously) on Days 1 and 15 of a 28-day cycle.

### Can ABVD Be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicines or supplements.

### What Are The Important Side Effects Of ABVD?

- Allergic reaction  
ABVD may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include a rash, flushing, shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, dizziness, having abdominal, back or chest pain, or feeling unwell.
- Drug leakage  
ABVD may leak out of the veins and damage the tissue around the vein. This is called extravasation. Inform the nurse immediately if you have any stinging, pain, redness or swelling around the vein. Extravasation is not common but if it happens it's important that it is managed quickly.
- Facial flushing  
You may suddenly feel warm and your face may become red while the drug is being given. This should only last a few minutes.

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection can occur as ABVD can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of infection:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash your hands after toileting.</li> <li>- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>- Avoid raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience signs of infection such as fever with a temperature of 38°C and above, chills and shivering. Avoid taking Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever. Be aware that taking Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.</li> </ul>
Bruising or bleeding can occur as ABVD can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of bleeding problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>- Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any severe bleeding (eg, passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.</li> </ul>
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take small, frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid smells that make you feel nauseous.</li> <li>• Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain adequate hydration (at least 2 litres) of fluids per day unless informed otherwise by your doctor. Your doctor may prescribe you stool softeners to prevent constipation.</li> <li>• Inform your doctor immediately if you experience severe abdominal pains.</li> </ul>
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>• Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Difficulty in passing urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor immediately if you have decrease in urination or painful urination.</li> </ul>
Harmless red or pinkish discolouration of the urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is expected as it is the colour of Doxorubicin and will last for one to two days after chemotherapy.</li> </ul>
Hair Loss or thinning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity to the sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your skin may be more sensitive to the sun. Avoid direct sunlight and apply sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help. Alternatively, wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. Wear dark sunglasses.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Skin rashes, skin tenderness, skin darkening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These usually occur 2-3 weeks after initiation of Bleomycin. Your skin may darken in some areas such as your elbows, knees and hands. This will slowly return to normal when you stop Bleomycin. Inform your doctor if the rash is very irritating.</li> </ul>
Discoloration and nail thickening, tenderness, swelling and skin peeling of the finger tip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your nails and fingers will gradually return to normal when you stop Bleomycin treatment.</li> </ul>
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if you have this symptom or trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects</li> </ul>
Muscle aches and joint pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild pain can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol ®). Inform your doctor if pain is not controlled by Paracetamol (Panadol ®). Avoid Paracetamol (Panadol ®) when you are having fever.</li> <li>• Taking regular warm baths may also help.</li> </ul>
Fever and chills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These may occur shortly after treatment with Bleomycin, and should not last longer than 24 hours. These can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol ®).</li> <li>• If fever persists for more than 24 hours, it could be a sign of infection and would require medical attention.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Fatigue or Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Inform your doctor if fatigue is persistent or worsens.</li> </ul>
Dizziness, seizures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor immediately if you experience mood changes, dizziness or seizures.</li> </ul>
Hearing loss or hearing difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor immediately if you experience hearing difficulty or hearing loss.</li> </ul>
Changes the way the heart works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may require tests to check how well your heart is working before, during and sometimes after treatment.</li> <li>• Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, tightness in chest, chest pain, fast or irregular heart beat or sudden swelling of legs.</li> </ul>
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>
Bleomycin induced lung toxicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your doctor may check your lung function prior to initiation of Bleomycin, with/ without regular chest x-rays during treatment with Bleomycin.</li> <li>• If you experience breathlessness, cough, fever and chills or chest pain, please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Risk of blood disorders/leukemia and secondary cancers	Occurs very rarely. Please discuss with your physician if you have concerns.

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

### Are There Any Special Precautions That I Need To Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- You must not become pregnant during treatment with ABVD and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- ABVD may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breast-feed during treatment.

### What Else Can I Do To Help My Condition?

- Exercise  
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Avoid strenuous exercise, and rest when you are feeling tired.
- Stay positive  
Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.

- Adequate hydration  
Maintain adequate hydration with 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of getting constipation and also prevent dehydration.
- Medical and dental treatment  
If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy. Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are having chemotherapy.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>



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