

Pharmacy

DRUG INFORMATION

Bendamustine – Rituximab Regimen



What is Bendamustine – Rituximab Regimen

- Bendamustine-Rituximab regimen is used to treat some types of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

How Is Bendamustine – Rituximab Administered?

- On the first day, you will receive Bendamustine and Rituximab as separate infusions into your veins (intravenous). On the second day, you will receive Bendamustine only. This cycle is usually repeated every 28 days.

Can Bendamustine – Rituximab 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 Bendamustine – Rituximab?

- Infusion related reaction
 - These are usually mild or moderate, but rarely, they can be more severe. You may be given drugs before the infusion to reduce the chance of a reaction happening.
 - If you do have an infusion related reaction, this can usually be treated by slowing or stopping the drip until the reaction is over. Any future infusions will be given at a slower rate.
 - *Inform the nurses immediately during infusion of Bendamustine – Rituximab if you experience the following:*
 - Flu-like symptoms, such as headache, feeling flushed, having a fever, chills or dizziness
 - Red, warm and itchy bumps on the skin
 - Swelling in the lips, tongue or throat
 - Breathlessness, wheezing, a cough or sudden difficulty breathing
 - Chest tightness or chest pain
- Drug Leakage

Bendamustine 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.

- Low blood pressure
Blood pressure of some patients may drop during the infusion and you may experience dizziness. If this happens, inform the nurse-in-charge. Your blood pressure will be checked regularly throughout the infusion. If you normally take medicines to lower your blood pressure, please inform the doctor or nurses prior to starting the infusion.
- 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 Bendamustine – Rituximab can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash your hands after toileting. - Avoid crowds and people who are sick. - Avoid raw food. • Please proceed to the A&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.
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Bendamustine – Rituximab can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce risk of bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not pick your nose. - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush. - Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop. • Please proceed to the A&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.

Side Effect	Management
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take small, frequent meals. • Avoid smells that make you feel nauseous • Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor. • Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.
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"> • Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush. • Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight. • Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.
Skin rashes, reddening of skin, itching of skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are rare side effects. Please inform your doctor immediately if you experience skin reactions.
Fatigue or Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Inform your doctor if fatigue is persistent or worsens.
Changes in blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may experience low or high blood pressure. Your doctor will monitor your blood pressure regularly. • If you have a blood pressure monitoring machine at home, you can measure your blood pressure every day and record it in a book.

Side Effect	Management
Changes in the way the heart works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience significant swelling of hands or feet, shortness of breath and/or chest pain.
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.
Risk of blood disorders/leukemia and secondary cancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This 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 Bendamustine – Rituximab and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 12 months after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Bendamustine - Rituximab 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>

