

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Bleomycin Injection



What is Bleomycin?

- Bleomycin is commonly used in combination with other chemotherapy to treat lymphoma, solid tumours or certain types of skin cancer.

How is Bleomycin Administered?

- Bleomycin can be given as an injection into your vein (intravenous), into your muscle (intramuscular) or under the skin (subcutaneous).

Can Bleomycin Be Administered 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 Bleomycin?

If you are using Bleomycin for the first time, a test dose will usually be required. Inform the nurses immediately during administration of Bleomycin if you experience the following:

- Allergic reaction
Bleomycin may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include a rash, flushing or shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, feeling dizzy, having abdominal, back or chest pain or feeling unwell.
- Pain along the vein
Bleomycin may cause pain along the vein. If you feel pain, tell your nurse straight away so that the infusion site can be checked. They may give the drug more slowly or flush it through with more fluids to reduce pain.

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

Side Effect	Management
Fever and chills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These may occur shortly after treatment with Bleomycin, and should not last longer than 24 hours. • These can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol ®). • If fever persists for more than 24 hours, it could be a sign of infection and would require medical attention.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take small, frequent meals. • Avoid smells that precipitate nausea. • 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.
Swelling, bruising, tenderness and redness of the skin at injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply cool compress on the area or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day. • Inform your doctor if the symptoms do not subside.

Side Effect	Management
Skin rashes, skin tenderness, skin darkening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These usually occur two to three 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.
Hair Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.
Discoloration and nail thickening, tenderness, swelling and skin peeling of the finger tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing gloves when washing dishes or using detergents will help protect your nails during treatment. • If you get pain, redness or swelling around your nails, inform your doctor. • Your nails and fingers will gradually return to normal when you stop Bleomycin treatment.
Rarely interstitial lung disease may occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience a sudden onset of shortness of breath, cough and/or fever

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 Bleomycin and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after cessation of treatment.
- If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Bleomycin 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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