

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Bortezomib (Velcade[®]) Injection



What is Bortezomib?

- Bortezomib is an anti-cancer drug used to treat certain types of cancers such as multiple myeloma or lymphoma. It may be used in combination with other chemotherapy agents.

How is Bortezomib Administered?

- Bortezomib is usually administered as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous) or into your vein (intravenous).

Can Bortezomib 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 Bortezomib?

- 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 Bortezomib 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.

Side Effect	Management
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Bortezomib 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 (e.g. passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.
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.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. Drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform your doctor if you have this symptom or trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects.
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
Muscle aches and joint pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mild pain can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol ®). Inform your doctor if pain is not controlled by Paracetamol. Avoid Paracetamol when you are having fever. Taking regular warm baths may also help.
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.
Dizziness, light-headed or fainting spells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These may be signs of low blood pressure. Inform your doctor if you are on any hypertensive medications and seek medical attention if you experience these symptoms.
Risk of reactivation of the chicken pox virus (Shingles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be prescribed anti-viral medication to reduce the risk of this happening.
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 and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.

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 Bortezomib and must use effective contraceptive measures during and up to 3 months after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.

- Bortezomib 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 two to three 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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