

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Epirubicin Injection



What is Epirubicin?

- Epirubicin is usually used in combination with other medicines to treat lymphomas and solid tumours.

How is Epirubicin Administered / Taken?

- Epirubicin is usually administered into a vein through slow injection over 5 to 10 minutes.

Can Epirubicin be Administered With Other Medications?

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

What are the Important Side Effects of Epirubicin Injection?

Inform the nurses immediately during infusion of Epirubicin if you experience the following:

- Allergic reaction
Epirubicin may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include: a rash, flushed or shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, feeling dizzy, having pain in your stomach, back or chest or feeling unwell.
- Drug leakage
Epirubicin may leak out of the veins and could potentially 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 get red while the drug is being given. This should only last a few minutes.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection can occur as Epirubicin 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 using toilet. - Avoid crowds and people who are sick - Do not share food and avoid taking raw food. Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of an infection such as fever with a temperature above 38°C, chills, and burning sensation when passing urine. Do not take Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever unless instructed by your doctor/ nurse.
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Epirubicin 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"> - Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself - Clean your nose by blowing gently; Do not pick your nose - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily - Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of bleeding such as blood in urine or stools, or easy bruising.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small frequent meals or sucking hard, sugar-free candy may help. Please remember to take the medicines for nausea or vomiting as instructed by your doctor.
Harmless red or pinkish discolouration of the urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is expected as it is the colour of the medicine and it will last one to two days after chemotherapy.

Side Effect	Management
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 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 with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.
Hair Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.
Rarely, changes in heart function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may require tests to check how well your heart is working before, during and sometimes, after treatment. If you experience pain or tightness in your chest, feel breathless or notice changes to your heartbeat at any time during or after treatment, please proceed to A&E department immediately.

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 Epirubicin and must use an effective contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after the cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Epirubicin 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. Do 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 being constipated 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.

