

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Epirubicin Injection



What is Epirubicin?

- Epirubicin is usually used to treat lymphomas and solid tumours.

How is Epirubicin Administered?

- Epirubicin is usually given into the vein (intravenous) over five to ten 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?

- Allergic reaction
Epirubicin 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.
- Drug leakage
Epirubicin 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 is important that it is managed quickly.
- 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 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 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

Side Effect	Management
	Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.
Bruising or bleeding can 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"> - 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 or persistent 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 can cause 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.
Hair Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.

Side Effect	Management
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.
Heart problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may require tests to check how well your heart is working before, during and sometimes after treatment. Please proceed to the A&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.
Harmless red or pinkish discolouration of the urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is expected as it is the colour of Epirubicin and will last for one to two days after chemotherapy.
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?

- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Epirubicin and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to six months after stopping 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 breastfeed 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 receiving anti-cancer treatment. Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are receiving anti-cancer treatment.

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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