

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Etoposide Capsules



What is Etoposide?

- Etoposide is an anti-cancer drug usually used for the treatment of lung cancer, testicular cancer or lymphoma. It may be used in combination with other chemotherapy agents.

How is Etoposide Taken?

- Etoposide is usually taken orally once daily. Try not to touch the medicine with your bare hands; use the medicine cup provided to take your medicine.
- Swallow them whole with a glass of water on an empty stomach. Do not chew or crush the medicines. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If you miss a dose of Etoposide, take it as soon as possible if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- If you vomit the dose of Etoposide, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Can Etoposide be Taken With Other Medications?

- You should not drink grapefruit/pomelo juice or eat grapefruit/pomelo during your treatment with Etoposide. It may affect the amount of Etoposide in your blood to an undesirable effect.
- 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 Etoposide?

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

Side Effect	Management
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if you have trouble buttoning up shirts or you are unable to pick up objects.
Hair loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.
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.
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 if any.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may prescribe medicines to control diarrhoea. Inform your doctor if it is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. • Make sure you drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day while you are having diarrhoea. • Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.
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.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection may be increased as Etoposide 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.
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.
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Etoposide 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.

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 Etoposide 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.
- Etoposide 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.

How do I Store Etoposide?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

