

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Melphalan Tablet



What is Melphalan?

- Melphalan is an anti-cancer drug used to treat multiple myeloma or solid tumours such as ovarian cancer.

How is Melphalan Administered / Taken?

- Melphalan is taken orally once daily or based on the schedule instructed by your physician on an empty stomach.
- The tablet should be swallowed whole. Do not chew or crush the tablet. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If possible, handle the medication yourself. If you need a family member or caregiver to give the medication, ensure that they wash their hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you miss a dose of Melphalan, 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.

Can Melphalan Be Administered / Taken 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 Melphalan?

- 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 Melphalan 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.
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Melphalan 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 (eg, 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.

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 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.
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.

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 Melphalan 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.
- Melphalan 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 Melphalan?

- Store your medication in a refrigerator between 2 – 8°C. Do not freeze.

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.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>

