

## PHARMACY

### Drug Information

# Procarbazine Capsule



### What is Procarbazine Capsule?

- Procarbazine is used to treat lymphoma or brain tumour. It is usually given in combination with other chemotherapy drugs.

### How is Procarbazine Administered/Taken?

- Procarbazine is usually taken orally once daily at bedtime, with or without food.
- The capsule should be swallowed whole. Do not chew or crush the capsules. 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 or vomit a dose of Procarbazine, skip the missed dose and take it at the next scheduled timing.

### Can Procarbazine 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.
- Avoid tyramine-containing foods such as cheese, smoked or pickled foods, fermented vegetables, overripe fruits, meat extract, yeast extract, tofu and soy products during and up to one week after stopping Procarbazine.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking Procarbazine. Avoid taking too much caffeinated foods and drinks.

### What are the Important Side Effects of Procarbazine?

- 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 Procarbazine can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash your hands after toileting.</li> <li>- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>- Avoid raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience signs of infection</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
	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 Procarbazine can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce risk of bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>- Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;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.</li> </ul>
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take small, frequent meals.</li> <li>Avoid smells that precipitate nausea.</li> <li>Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.</li> </ul>
Skin rashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your doctor if the rash is very irritating. For mild rashes, inform your doctor on the next visit as it generally resolves before the next treatment.</li> </ul>
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild pain can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol®). Inform your doctor if pain is not controlled by Paracetamol (Panadol®). Avoid Paracetamol (Panadol®) when you are having fever.</li> <li>Inform your doctor if headache persists or if it is associated with vomiting, confusion or visual changes.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Muscle aches and joint pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild pain can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol®). Inform your doctor if pain is not controlled by Paracetamol (Panadol®). Avoid Paracetamol (Panadol®) when you are having fever.</li> <li>Taking regular warm baths may also help.</li> </ul>
Fatigue or tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Inform your doctor if fatigue is persistent or worsens.</li> </ul>
Increased in blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood pressure will be monitored regularly when you come to the clinic. If you have a blood pressure monitoring machine at home, you can measure your blood pressure every day and record it in a book.</li> <li>Please remember to take your medicines for high blood pressure if you are taking them.</li> </ul>
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>
Lung problems (Pneumonitis, inflammation of the lung)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain and/or new or worsening cough.</li> </ul>
Risk of secondary cancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This occurs very rarely. Please discuss with your physician if you have concerns.</li> </ul>

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 Procarbazine 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.
- Procarbazine 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.

### **How Do I Store Procarbazine?**

- 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.

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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