

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Trastuzumab (Herceptin®) Injection



What is Trastuzumab Injection?

- Trastuzumab is used for the treatment of breast and stomach cancers. They specifically target the human epidermal receptor 2 (HER2) protein, which is commonly over-expressed in cancer cells.

How is Trastuzumab Administered / Taken?

- Trastuzumab is usually given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous) or into your vein (intravenous).

Can Trastuzumab 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 Trastuzumab?

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

- Infusion related reaction
 - These are usually mild or moderate, but rarely, they can be more severe. You may be given drugs before the infusion to reduce the chances of a reaction happening.
 - If you do have a reaction, this can usually be treated by slowing or stopping the drip until the reaction is over. Any future infusions will be given at a slower rate.
 - *Inform the nurses immediately during infusion of Trastuzumab if you experience the following:*
 - Flu-like symptoms, such as feeling flushed, having a headache, fever, chills or dizziness
 - Red, warm and itchy bumps on the skin
 - Swelling in the lips, tongue or throat
 - Breathlessness, wheezing, a cough or sudden difficulty in breathing
 - Chest tightness or chest pain

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

Side Effect	Management
Nausea or Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take small, frequent meals. • Avoid smells that precipitate nausea. • Take medications for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor. • Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with the use of medication. • Drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. • Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.
Muscle aches and joint pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Taking regular warm baths may also help.
Effects on the heart	<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 in breathing, tightness in chest, chest pain, fast or irregular heart beat or sudden swelling of legs.

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 Trastuzumab and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 7 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Trastuzumab 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 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 getting constipation and 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.

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

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

