

## PHARMACY

### Drug Information

# Vincristine Injection



### What is Vincristine?

- Vincristine is commonly used for the treatment of cancers of the blood and solid tumours.

### How is Vincristine Administered / Taken?

- Vincristine is usually given by injection into a vein (intravenous injection).

### Can Vincristine 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 Vincristine?

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

- Allergic reaction

Vincristine may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it is being given. Signs of a reaction can include a rash, flushing, shortness of breath, facial or lip swelling, feeling dizzy, having abdominal, back or chest pain or feeling unwell.

- Pain along the vein

Vincristine 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 Vincristine 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 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.</li> </ul>
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Vincristine 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 bleeding (e.g. passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.</li> </ul>
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constipation frequently occurs and may be severe. Maintain adequate hydration (2-3 litres) of fluids per day unless informed otherwise by your doctor.</li> <li>Your doctor may prescribe you stool softeners to prevent constipation.</li> <li>Inform your doctor immediately if you experience severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Difficulty in passing urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your doctor immediately if you have decrease in urination or painful urination.</li> </ul>
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your doctor if you have this symptom, trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects.</li> </ul>
Headache, jaw pain or muscle 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.</li> <li>Avoid Paracetamol when you are having fever.</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>
Dizziness, seizures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your doctor immediately if you experience mood changes, dizziness or seizures.</li> </ul>
Hearing loss or hearing difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your doctor immediately if you experience hearing difficulty.</li> </ul>
Hair Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a wig or hat or use a gentle shampoo.</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 Vincristine and must use effective contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Vincristine 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 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.

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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