

Pharmacy

DRUG INFORMATION

Azacitidine Injection



What is Azacitidine?

- Azacitidine is an anti-cancer drug used to treat blood cancers, usually leukemia or myelodysplastic syndromes.

How Is Azacitidine Administered?

- Azacitidine is usually given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously).

Can Azacitidine 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 Azacitidine?

- Allergic reaction
Azacitidine may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include a rash, flushing or shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, feeling dizzy, having abdominal, back or chest pain or feeling unwell.
- 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 Azacitidine 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.

Side Effect	Management
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Azacitidine 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 make you feel nauseous Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor. Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain adequate hydration (at least 2 litres) of fluids per day unless informed otherwise by your doctor. Your doctor may prescribe you stool softeners to prevent constipation. Inform your doctor immediately if you experience severe abdominal pains.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. Drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. Avoid milk, dairy products, high fibre food or spicy food whilst you are having diarrhoea.

Side Effect	Management
Swelling, bruising, tenderness and redness of the skin at injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply cool compress on the area or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day. Inform your doctor if the symptoms do not subside.
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.
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.
Changes in the way the kidney works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience swelling of the legs and feet, reduced passing of water, fast heartbeat or confusion.

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 Azacitidine and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 3 months after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.

- Azacitidine 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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