

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Brentuximab Injection



What is Brentuximab?

- Brentuximab is a targeted therapy drug used in the treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma and some rarer types of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

How is Brentuximab Administered?

- Brentuximab is usually given by injection into a vein (intravenous) over 30 minutes every two to three weeks. It can be given on its own or in combination with chemotherapy.

Can Brentuximab 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 Brentuximab?

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 chance of a reaction happening.
- If you do have an infusion related 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 Brentuximab if you experience the following:*
 - Flu-like symptoms, such as headache, feeling flushed, having a 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 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
Risk of infection can occur as Brentuximab 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 Brentuximab 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 or persistent bleeding (e.g. 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
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.
Skin rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For mild rash, you may apply topical steroid creams to help with the rashes and ensure use of moisturisers and sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30. • Inform your doctor if rash is widespread or worsening despite applying topical creams.
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.
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if you have this symptom or trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects.
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.
Fluid retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may experience swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs if your body retains extra fluids. • Elevating your legs on a foot stool or with a cushion or pillow may help to reduce the swelling.

Side Effect	Management
Changes in mood or usual behaviour, confusion, problems thinking, or loss of memory; changes in vision, speech, or walking; or decreased strength or weakness on one side of the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These could be symptoms of a rare but serious infection of the brain, and may occur within 3 months of stopping treatment. Please proceed to the A&E department immediately.
Lung problems (Pneumonitis, inflammation of the lung)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience difficulty in breathing, chest pain, wheezing and/or new or worsening cough.
Pancreatitis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform your doctor if you are experiencing bloating, indigestion, fatty stools, loss of appetite, sweating, abdominal pain, and weight loss.
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.

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?

- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Brentuximab and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to six months after stopping of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Brentuximab 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.

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>

