

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Fludarabine Injection



What is Fludarabine?

- Fludarabine is an anti-cancer drug used in the treatment of leukemia and lymphoma.

How is Fludarabine Administered?

- Fludarabine is given as an injection into your vein (intravenous) over several minutes. It can also be given as an infusion.

Can Fludarabine be Administered With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicine or supplements.

What are the Important Side Effects of Fludarabine?

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

- Allergic reaction
Fludarabine may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include: skin rash, flushing, shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, dizziness, having pain in your stomach, back or chest, 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
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if you have trouble buttoning up shirts or you are unable to pick up objects.
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.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small frequent meals or sucking hard, sugar-free candy may help. • Please remember to take the medicines for nausea or vomiting as instructed by your doctor if any.
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.
Risk of infection may be increased as Fludarabine 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 using toilet. - Avoid crowds and people who are sick - Do not share food and avoid taking raw food. • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of an infection such as fever with a temperature above 38°C, chills, and burning sensation when passing urine. Do not take Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever unless instructed by your doctor/ nurse.

Side Effect	Management
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Fludarabine 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"> - Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself - Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily - Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of bleeding such as blood in urine or stools, or easy bruising.
Neurological changes (coma, vision changes, seizures, confusion, paralysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience such symptoms.

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 Fludarabine and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Fludarabine 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 Other Things I Can Do To Help My Condition?

- Exercise
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Do 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 being constipated 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.

