



Bleomycin

(blee oh mye' sin)

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

Bleomycin can cause severe lung problems. If you experience any of the following symptoms, call your doctor immediately: breathing discomfort, shortness of breath, wheezing, fever, or chills.

About your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed the drug bleomycin to help treat your illness. The drug is given by injection into a large muscle, a vein, or just under the skin. The drug also can be placed, through a chest tube, into the space surrounding the lungs. Occasionally, small test doses are given to check your reaction before the remainder of the drug is administered.

This medication is used to treat:

- lymphomas
- squamous cell carcinomas
- testicular carcinomas
- malignant pleural effusions

This medication is sometimes prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

Bleomycin is an antibiotic that is used only for its cancer-fighting effects; it slows or stops the growth of cancer cells in your body. The length of treatment depends on the types of drugs you are taking, how well your body responds to them, and the type of cancer you have.

Other uses for this medicine

Bleomycin is also used to treat Kaposi's sarcoma related to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), renal carcinoma, soft tissue sarcomas, otorhinolaryngeal tumors, and mycosis fungoides. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this drug for your condition.

Precautions

Before taking bleomycin,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to bleomycin or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin, filgrastim (G-CSF, Neupogen) or other cytokines (GM-CSF, Sargramostim), and vitamins.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had kidney or lung disease.
- Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should tell their doctor before they begin taking this drug. You should not plan to have children while receiving chemotherapy or for a while after treatments. (Talk to your doctor for further details.) Use a reliable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy. Bleomycin may harm the fetus.
- do not have any vaccinations (e.g., measles or flu shots) without talking to your doctor.

Side effects

Side effects from bleomycin are common and include:

- nausea and vomiting
- loss of appetite
- weakness
- darkened and thickened areas of skin

Tell your doctor if the following symptom is severe or lasts for several hours:

- lightheadedness

If you experience the following symptom, call your doctor immediately:

- skin reactions such as itching, tenderness, redness, or swelling

If you experience a serious side effect, you or your doctor may send a report to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program online [at <http://www.fda.gov/MedWatch/index.html>] or by phone [1-800-332-1088].

In case of emergency/overdose

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911.

Brand names

- Blenoxane®

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