



Mechlorethamine

(me klor eth' a meen)

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

When mechlorethamine is administered into a vein, it may leak into and irritate surrounding tissue. Your doctor or nurse will monitor your administration site for this reaction.

About your treatment

Your doctor has ordered the drug mechlorethamine to help treat your illness. The drug is given by injection into a vein.

This medication is used to treat:

- Hodgkin's disease
- lymphosarcoma
- chronic myelocytic or chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- polycythemia vera
- mycosis fungoides
- bronchogenic carcinoma

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

Mechlorethamine is in a class of drugs known as alkylating agents; 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

Mechlorethamine is also used in the treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, malignant melanoma, breast cancer, renal cell carcinoma, and carcinoma of the GI tract. Mechlorethamine has been applied to the skin to treat mycosis fungoides and psoriasis. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this drug for your condition.

Precautions

Before taking mechlorethamine,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to mechlorethamine or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin and vitamins.
- you should know that mechlorethamine may interfere with the normal menstrual cycle (period) in women and may stop sperm production in men. However, you should not assume that you cannot get pregnant or that you cannot get someone else pregnant. Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should tell their doctors 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. Mechlorethamine may harm the fetus.
- do not have any vaccinations (e.g., measles or flu shots) without talking to your doctor.
- tell your doctor about any infectious disease you have.
- be aware that mechlorethamine has been associated with the development of other types of cancers. Talk with your doctor about the potential risk of developing a new cancer.

Side effects

Side effects from mechlorethamine are common and include:

- loss of appetite or weight
- weakness

Tell your doctor if either of these symptoms is severe or lasts for several hours:

- fatigue
- diarrhea

If you experience any of the following symptoms, call your doctor immediately:

- pain and redness at the injection site
- unusual bruising or bleeding
- black, tarry stools
- red urine
- cough
- sore throat
- fever
- chills
- dizziness, lightheadedness, or drowsiness
- numbness or tingling in the fingertips or toes
- nausea and vomiting
- shortness of breath or wheezing
- rash

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.

Special instructions

- Drink plenty of fluids and urinate frequently during your treatment.
- The most common side effect of mechlorethamine is a decrease in the number of blood cells. Your doctor may order tests before, during, and after your treatment to see if your blood cells are affected by the drug.

Brand names

- Mustargen®

Other names

- Nitrogen mustard

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