



Vincristine

(vin kris' teen)

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

Vincristine when administered into a vein may leak into surrounding tissue. Your doctor or nurse will monitor your administration site for this reaction.

About your treatment

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

This medication is used to treat:

- leukemia
- Hodgkin's disease
- non-Hodgkin's lymphomas
- neuroblastoma
- rhabdomyosarcoma
- Wilms' tumor
- Kaposi's sarcoma related to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)

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

Vincristine is in a class of drugs known as vinca alkaloids. 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

Vincristine is also used to treat some types of sarcoma, small cell lung cancer, osteogenic sarcoma, Ewing's sarcoma, Burkitt's lymphoma, brain medulloblastoma, multiple myeloma, idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura, and autoimmune hemolytic anemia. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this drug for your condition.

Precautions

Before taking vincristine,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to vincristine or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin, itraconazole (Sporanox), and vitamins.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had heart, liver, nerve, or muscle disease.
- tell your doctor if you are currently receiving radiation therapy.
- you should know that vincristine 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. Vincristine 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 vincristine are common and include:

- nausea and vomiting
- stomach pain and cramps
- constipation
- diarrhea
- jaw pain, headache, or other aches
- thinned or brittle hair

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

- fatigue
- mouth blistering

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

- tingling, numbness, and cramping in the legs or arms for longer than a few days
- severe abdominal or muscle cramping
- difficulty walking
- hoarseness
- vision problems
- change in normal bowel habits for more than 2 days
- sore throat
- swelling of the feet and ankles
- difficulty controlling bladder
- increased, painful, or difficult urination
- redness, pain, or swelling at the injection site

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

- A common side effect of vincristine is a decrease 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

- Oncovin®
- Vincasar®

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