



Etoposide Oral and Injection

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

Etoposide can cause a decrease in the number of blood cells in your bone marrow. Your doctor will order tests before, during, and after your treatment to see if your blood cells are affected by this drug.

About your treatment

Your doctor has ordered the drug etoposide to help treat your illness. The drug can be taken by mouth with capsules or by injection into a vein.

This medication is used to treat:

- testicular cancer
- lung cancer

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

Etoposide is in a class of drugs known as podophyllotoxin derivatives; 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

Etoposide also is used to treat non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, mycosis fungoides, Hodgkin's disease, acute myelogenous leukemia, acute lymphocytic leukemia, chronic myelogenous leukemia, Wilms' tumor, neuroblastoma, Kaposi's sarcoma related to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), gestational trophoblastic tumors, ovarian germ-cell tumors, hepatoma, Ewing's sarcoma, rhabdomyosarcoma, brain tumors, and refractory advanced breast cancer. High doses of etoposide along with other chemotherapy drugs have been used with autologous bone marrow transplant for refractory advanced malignant neoplasms. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this drug for your condition.

Precautions

Before taking etoposide,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to etoposide or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin and vitamins.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had heart, liver, or kidney disease.
- you should know that etoposide 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. Etoposide may harm the fetus.
- do not have any vaccinations (e.g., measles or flu shots) without talking to your doctor.
- be aware that etoposide can potentially cause cancer. Talk to your doctor about the potential risk of developing a new cancer while taking this drug.

Side effects

Side effects from etoposide are common and include:

- nausea and vomiting
- loss of appetite
- constipation
- diarrhea
- stomach pain
- changes in taste
- 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:

- unusual bruising or bleeding
- dizziness, lightheadedness, or feeling of faintness
- pain at the injection site
- persistent diarrhea or any change in normal bowel habits for more than 2 days
- fever
- chills
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- breathing discomfort
- rash
- itching

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].

Storage conditions

Keep etoposide in the container it came in and out of reach of children. Store it in the refrigerator. Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

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

- Etopophos®
- Toposar®
- VePesid®

Other names

- VP-16

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