



Vinblastine

(vin blas' teen)

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

When vinblastine is administered into a vein, it 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 vinblastine to help treat your illness. The drug is given by injection into a vein.

This medication is used to treat:

- Hodgkin's disease
- non-Hodgkin's lymphomas
- mycosis fungoides
- testicular cancer
- Kaposi's sarcoma related to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)
- Letterer-Siwe disease

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

Vinblastine 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

Vinblastine is also used to treat non-small cell lung cancer, bladder cancer, head and neck cancer, cervical cancer, 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 vinblastine,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to vinblastine or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin, itraconazole (Sporanox), phenytoin (Dilantin), and vitamins.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had liver disease.
- you should know that vinblastine 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. Vinblastine 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 vinblastine are common and include:

- nausea and vomiting which usually lasts less than 24 hours
- stomach pain
- constipation
- diarrhea
- jaw pain, headache, or other aches
- thinned or brittle hair
- exposed areas of the skin may become easily sunburned

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 bleeding or bruising
- tingling, numbness, and cramping in the legs or arms for longer than a few days
- severe abdominal or muscle cramping
- difficulty walking
- hoarseness
- fever
- chills
- change in normal bowel habits for more than 2 days
- sore throat or mouth
- 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

- The most common side effect of vinblastine 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

- Velban®

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