

## Bexarotene (Targretin)

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### About This Medicine

BEXAROTENE (bexs AIR oh teen) treats skin sores caused by lymphoma. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It belongs to a group of medications called retinoids. It is given orally (by mouth).

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your care team if you have questions.

### Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection.
- Nausea
- Pain in your abdomen
- Infection
- Weakness
- Swelling in your legs, ankles, and/or feet
- Changes in your thyroid function
- Increase in your cholesterol and triglyceride level
- Headache
- Rash
- Dry skin

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 10% of people treated with bexarotene. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your care team.

### Warnings and Precautions

- Severe increase in your cholesterol and triglyceride level
- Inflammation of your pancreas which can be life-threatening.
- Changes in your liver function, which can cause liver failure and be life-threatening.
- A severe decrease in the number of white blood cells
- Sensitivity to sunlight/light. You may get a skin rash/reaction if you are in the sun or are exposed to sun lamps and tanning beds.

- Cataracts (clouding of the lens in your eye). This medicine may make cataracts worse or may raise the chance of new cataracts.
- Blood sugar levels may change

**Note:** Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.

## How to Take Your Medicine

- Take the medicine with food.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your care team for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Overdosage:** If you think you have taken too much of this medicine contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water, before and after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- This medicine may be present in the urine, stool and other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your care team after your treatment. If you take a pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at 36° to 77°F (2° to 25°C), away from light, heat and humidity. Do not take this medicine after the expiration date printed on the container. Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medicine label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your care team how to dispose of unused medicine.

## Treating Side Effects

- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your care team tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your care team about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your care team says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your care team for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- Moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors even for a short time. Cover up when you are out in the sun. Wear wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Keep your neck, chest, and back covered.



- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your care team if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your care team if you are experiencing pain.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of bexarotene with food, however this medicine should be taken with food.
- To avoid serious toxic effects, do not take more than 15,000 units of vitamin A per day while you are taking bexarotene. Talk to your care team about all of the vitamins you are taking.
- Check with your care team about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with bexarotene. Also, check with your care team before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- This medicine interacts with hormonal birth control (i.e., birth control pills, skin patches, vaginal rings, injections) and affects how they work. Discuss with your care team what method of birth control may be right for you during your treatment.

## When to Call Your Care Team

Call your care team if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Headache that does not go away
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Pain in your abdomen and/or severe pain in your abdomen that may spread to your back
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- New rash and/or itching or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Dry skin that is bothersome
- Develop sensitivity to sunlight/light
- Swelling in your legs, ankles, and/or feet
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Signs of low blood sugar: feeling sleepy, increased hunger, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Signs of high blood sugar: unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability

- Signs of low thyroid function: tiredness, unexplained weight gain, hair loss, dry skin, constipation, increased sensitivity to cold
- Signs of infection: fever or chills, cough, trouble breathing, severe pain in your abdomen, difficulty urinating, burning or pain when you pass urine, redness and/or swelling of the skin

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, you should use **two** methods of birth control, one of which should be non-hormonal, starting 1 month before starting this medicine, while taking this medicine and for at least 1 month after the last dose. Birth control pills (oral contraceptives) and other hormonal forms of birth control may not be effective with this medicine. Discuss with your care team what method of birth control may be right for you during your treatment. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant.
- You should start treatment with bexarotene on the 2nd or 3rd day of your normal menstrual period.
- A monthly pregnancy test is required.
- If you can get your partner pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for 1 month after the last dose. Tell your care team right away if you think your partner might be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine.
- **Fertility warning:** The effect of this medicine on fertility is not known. If you plan to have children, talk with you care team.

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