

Bleomycin

About This Medicine

BLEOMYCIN (blee oh MYE sin) treats some types of cancer. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It may also be used to prevent and treat the buildup of fluid around the lungs that can be caused by cancer. It works by helping your body create less space around your lungs, so that fluid cannot build up. It is given in the vein (IV), as an injection under your skin (subcutaneously), as injection into the muscle (IM), or as an injection into the space between the two layers that surround the lung (intrapleural).

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

Possible Side Effects

- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Fever and chills
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Rash, sometimes with small fluid-filled bumps/blisters
- Itching
- Stretch marks
- Thickening and/or darkening of the skin
- Skin tenderness and/or redness
- Changes in your nail color, nail loss and/or brittle nail
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although with certain medicine, hair loss can sometimes be permanent. Hair loss may happen suddenly or gradually. If you lose hair, you may lose it from your head, face, armpits, pubic area, chest, and/or legs. You may also notice your hair getting thin.

Note: 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



- Thickening and/or inflammation (swelling) of the lung tissues, which can be life-threatening. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some people. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- A severe reaction to this medicine may happen in some people with lymphoma. Symptoms may include confusion, fever, chills, low blood pressure and/or wheezing. This reaction can happen right away or several hours after receiving the first or second dose of bleomycin.
- Heart attack, stroke or other blood vessel problems may rarely occur
- Changes in your kidney function
- Changes in your liver function

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

Important Information

- 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.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- 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.
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- To help with decreased appetite, eat small, frequent meals. Eat foods high in calories and protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Consider using sauces and spices to increase taste. Daily exercise, with your care team's approval, may increase your appetite.
- To help with weight loss, drink fluids that contribute calories (whole milk, juice, soft drinks, sweetened beverages, milkshakes, and nutritional supplements) instead of water.

- Include a source of protein at every meal and snack, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day. Avoid coloring your hair.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry.
- Limit your use of hair spray, electric curlers, blow dryers, and curling irons.
- If you are interested in getting a wig, talk to your care team and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.
- To help with itching, moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outside.
- Keeping your nails moisturized may help with brittleness.
- 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.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of bleomycin with food.
- 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 bleomycin. 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.

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
- Confusion
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Dry cough
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back, or it can be constant. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Symptoms of a stroke such as sudden numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, feeling dizzy, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden bad headache with no known cause. **If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines



- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Weight loss over a long period of time
- 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
- Decreased or very dark urine
- Muscle and/or joint aching
- Clubbing (rounded and enlarged fingertips or toes)
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Itching that is bothersome
- Signs of inflammation/infection (redness, swelling, pain) of the tissue around your nails.
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Talk with your care team about breastfeeding during treatment. You may need to stop breastfeeding.
- **Fertility warning:** The effect of this medicine on fertility is not known. If you plan to have children, talk with you care team.

Revised May 2025

