

## Busulfan (Busulfex, Myleran)

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### About This Medicine

BUSULFAN (byoo SUL fan) treats leukemia. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It is given orally (by mouth) or in the vein (IV).

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

### Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Fever
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Electrolyte changes, especially potassium and magnesium
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Headache
- Feeling nervous or worried (anxiety)
- Trouble sleeping

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 60% of people treated with busulfan. 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 bone marrow suppression, which can be life-threatening. Most often, a stem cell transplant is needed after therapy to prevent complications from severe bone marrow suppression.
- Seizure. Common symptoms of a seizure can include confusion, blacking out, passing out, loss of hearing or vision, blurred vision, unusual smells or tastes (such as burning rubber), trouble



talking, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, repeated body movements, tense muscles that do not relax, and loss of control of urine and bowels. There are other less common symptoms of seizures. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.** Medication may be given to prevent seizures from occurring and to decrease your risk of seizures.

- Changes in your liver function and blockage of small veins in the liver, which can cause liver failure and be life-threatening.
- Fluid accumulating around your heart, which can be life-threatening.
- Changes and thickening and/or inflammation (swelling) of the lung tissues which may be life-threatening. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing. Sometimes these changes may not be seen for many years.
- Changes in your cells, which may raise your risk of getting another cancer.

**Note:** *Some of the side effects above are very rare. These side effects may be more severe if you are receiving high doses of this medication included in pre-transplant chemotherapy. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.*

## How to Take Your Medication

- **For oral busulfan:** Swallow the medicine as prescribed by your care team.
- **Missed doses:** If you vomit or miss a dose of busulfan, 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 room temperature in a dry place. 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 medication 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

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- 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.



- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your care team before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your care team about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- 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.
- 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 Interaction

- There are no known interactions of busulfan with food.
- This medicine may interact with other medicines. Tell your care team about all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) that you are taking at this time. 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
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded



- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Headache that does not go away
- Symptoms of a seizure such as confusion, blacking out, passing out, loss of hearing or vision, blurred vision, unusual smells or tastes (such as burning rubber), trouble talking, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, repeated body movements, tense muscles that do not relax, and loss of control of urine and bowels. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**
- Chest pain, especially when you lean forward or take deep breaths
- Dry cough
- Trouble breathing
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- 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
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- 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
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Signs of low potassium levels: weakness, tiredness, muscle cramps, constipation
- Signs of low magnesium: nausea, vomiting, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, muscle weakness and/or spasms, tingling in the arms and legs, confusion, seizures.

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for 6 months after the last dose. If you can get your partner pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for 3 months after the last dose. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant or think your partner might be pregnant.
- Menstrual bleeding may become irregular or stop while you are getting this medicine. Do not assume that you cannot become pregnant if you do not have a menstrual period.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine.
- **Fertility warning:** This medicine may affect your ability to have children in the future. If you plan to have children, talk with your care team.

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