

Carmustine (BiCNU)

About This Drug

Carmustine is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV).

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)
- Inflammation (swelling) of the lungs. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing.
- Changes in your kidney function

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 1% of patients treated with carmustine. 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 drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Skin and tissue irritation including redness, pain, warmth, or swelling at the IV site if the drug leaks out of the vein and into nearby tissue.
- Severe inflammation and/or scarring of the lungs, which can be life-threatening. Your risk of developing this may be higher if you have a history of lung disease, and/or received high doses of this drug. Sometimes these changes may not be seen for many years and may be permanent and not reversible.
- Severe bone marrow suppression
- This drug may raise your risk of getting a second cancer.

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

Important Information



- This drug may be present in the saliva, tears, sweat, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions. Talk to your doctor and/or your nurse about the necessary precautions to take during this time.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- 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 nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- 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 doctor or nurse 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 nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.

Food and Drug Interaction

- There are no known interactions of carmustine with food.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist 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 drug interactions with carmustine. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- 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.**

- Pain in your chest
- Dry and/or hacking cough
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Rapid, shallow breathing during exercise or while at rest
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Muscle and/or joint aching
- Clubbing (rounded and enlarged fingertips or toes)
- Weight loss over a long period of time
- While you are getting this drug, please tell your nurse right away if you have any pain, redness, or swelling at the site of the IV infusion
- Decreased or very dark urine
- If you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use highly effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for at least 6 months after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for at least 3 months after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should not breastfeed during treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm banking.

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