

Cetuximab (Erbix)

About This Medicine

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

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Decreased appetite
- Tiredness
- Infection
- Headache
- Pain in the joints
- Rash and/or a pimple like rash
- Itching
- Nail loss and/or brittle nail

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 25% or greater of patients treated with cetuximab. 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 medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- While you are getting this medicine in your vein (IV), you may have a reaction to the medicine, which can be life-threatening. This risk is increased if you have a history of tick bites, a red meat allergy, or IgE antibodies against galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose (alpha-gal). Sometimes you may be given medicine to stop or lessen these side effects. Your nurse will check you closely for these signs: fever or shaking chills, flushing, facial swelling, feeling dizzy, headache, trouble breathing, rash, itching, chest tightness, or chest pain. These reactions may happen after your infusion. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Heart attack and risk of sudden death
- Scarring of the lungs that causes stiffness in the lungs which makes breathing difficult and can be life-threatening.

- Severe skin reaction, which can be life-threatening. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful or peel off. You may also have a serious reaction causing blurred vision or other changes in eyesight.
- Electrolyte changes, especially low magnesium

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

- Cytotoxic medicines leave the body through urine and stool, but they can also be present in 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 health care provider after your treatment. If you take a cytotoxic pill each day, follow these precautions every day.

Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- 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). Eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- 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.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- 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 doctor's approval, may increase your appetite.
- To help with itching, 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. Follow these guidelines for at least 2 months after treatment.
- Keeping your nails moisturized may help with brittleness.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- Infusion reactions may occur after your infusion. If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.



Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of cetuximab with food.
- This medicine may interact with other medicines. Tell your doctor and pharmacist 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 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
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Pain in your chest
- Dry cough
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- 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.**
- Headache that does not go away
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- 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
- 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
- Pain that does not go away, or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Itching that is bothersome
- 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.
- Signs of inflammation/infection (redness, swelling, pain) of the tissue around your nails
- 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
- Signs of infusion reaction: fever or shaking chills, flushing, facial swelling, feeling dizzy, headache, trouble breathing, rash, itching, chest tightness, or chest pain. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**



- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 2 months after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 2 months after stopping treatment because this medicine could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In women, this medicine 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 egg banking.

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