

Eflornithine (Iwifin)

About This Medicine

Eflornithine is used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Loss of hearing
- Ear infection
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Fever
- Pneumonia

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 5% or greater of patients treated with eflornithine. 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

- 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.
- 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 medical team.

How to Take Your Medicine

- Swallow the medicine with or without food. If you cannot swallow tablets whole, the tablets can be chewed or crushed and mixed with 2 tablespoons of soft food or liquid. Swallow or eat the entire mixture. If any crushed tablet pieces remain, mix with another 2 tablespoons of soft food or liquid. Take the prepared mixture within 1 hour of mixing. Throw away any mixture left after 1 hour.
- **Missed dose:** If you miss a dose, and it is less than 7 hours until your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal schedule. If you miss a dose, and it is more than 7 hours until

your next dose, take the missed dose. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses. Do not replace a vomited dose and take your next dose at the regular time.

- **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.
- 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.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature.
- **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 nurse or your doctor 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 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.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you 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 nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop diarrhea.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of eflornithine with food.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) that you are taking at this time. The safety and use of dietary supplements and alternative diets are often not known. Using these might affect your cancer or interfere with your treatment. Until more is known, you should not use dietary supplements or alternative diets without your cancer doctor's help.



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
- Ear pain
- Fluid leaking from the ear
- Decreased hearing or loss of hearing
- Ringing in the ear
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Cough that is bothersome
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Signs of 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
- If you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

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 1 week after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 1 week after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 1 week after stopping treatment because this medicine could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this medicine. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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