

## Fludarabine

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### About This Drug

Fludarabine 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.
- Fever
- Chills
- Infection
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Tiredness and/or weakness
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Pain
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Pneumonia

**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 drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

### Warnings and Precautions

- Severe bone marrow suppression, which can be life-threatening
- Risk of severe and life-threatening infections
- Changes in your central nervous system can happen. The central nervous system is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You could feel extreme tiredness, agitation, confusion, hallucinations (see or hear things that are not there), have trouble understanding or speaking, loss of control of your bowels or bladder, eyesight changes, numbness or lack of strength to your arms, legs, face, or body, seizures or coma. **If you start to have any of these symptoms let your doctor know right away.**

- Autoimmune problems such as a breakdown of your red blood cells and/or platelets, which can cause anemia (decreased red blood cells) and increase your risk of bleeding. These problems can be life-threatening.
- Tumor lysis syndrome: This drug may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.
- Inflammation (swelling) of the lungs, especially when given in combination with pentostatin. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing.

**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.
- Talk to your doctor before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving fludarabine.
- This drug may impair your ability to drive or use machinery. Use caution and talk to your doctor and/or nurse about any precautions you may need to take.

## 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 plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- 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.
- 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 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.



- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of fludarabine 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 fludarabine. 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
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Extreme tiredness, agitation, or confusion
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- 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.**
- Hallucinations
- Trouble understanding or speaking
- Loss of control of bowels or bladder
- Blurry vision or changes in your eyesight
- Numbness or lack of strength to your arms, legs, face, or body
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Coughing up yellow, green or blood mucus
- Pain in your chest
- Dry cough or cough that is bothersome
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- 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
- Pain that does not go away, or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- 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 tumor lysis: confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures
- 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 and men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for at least 6 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 talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this drug. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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