

## Irinotecan (Camptosar)

---

### About This Medicine

IRINOTECAN (ir in oh TEE kan) treats some types of cancer. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It is given in the vein (IV).

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

### Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells and red blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection and make you tired and weak.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- Fever
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although with certain medicine, hair loss can sometimes be permanent. Hair loss may happen suddenly or gradually. If you lose hair, you may lose it from your head, face, armpits, pubic area, chest, and/or legs. You may also notice your hair getting thin.

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 30% or greater of people treated with irinotecan. 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 diarrhea and colitis, which is inflammation (swelling) in the colon - symptoms are diarrhea, stomach cramping, and sometimes blood in the bowel movements. Very rarely, an abnormal hole in your stomach, small and/or large intestine can happen. Diarrhea can begin shortly after the infusion or up to a week or two after, and can be life-threatening if it leads to dehydration, and other complications.

- Severe bone marrow suppression, which can be life-threatening. 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.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some people. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- Changes in your kidney function, which can cause kidney failure and be life-threatening
- Inflammation or scarring of the lungs, which can be life-threatening. You may have a cough and/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 care team.

## Important Information

- 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.
- It is important that you notify your care team at the first sign of diarrhea, so they can provide you with anti-diarrheal medicine and give you further instructions. Notify your care team if you are taking anti-diarrheal medicine and your symptoms have not improved or are worsening.
- This medicine may impair your ability to drive or use machinery. Use caution and ask your care team about precautions you should 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 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.
- If you are dizzy, get up slowly after sitting or lying.
- 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).



- 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.
- 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.
- If you are not able to move your bowels, check with your care team before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- Ask your care team about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation and/or 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 care team's approval, may increase your appetite.
- To help with weight loss, drink fluids that contribute calories (whole milk, juice, soft drinks, sweetened beverages, milkshakes, and nutritional supplements) instead of water.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your care team if you are experiencing pain.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day. Avoid coloring your hair.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry.
- Limit your use of hair spray, electric curlers, blow dryers, and curling irons.
- If you are interested in getting a wig, talk to your care team and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- This medicine may interact with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Talk to your care team as this could make side effects worse.
- Check with your care team 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 medicine interactions with irinotecan. 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.
- Avoid the use of St. John's Wort while taking irinotecan as this may lower the levels of the medicine in your body, which can make it less effective.

## 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
- Pain in your chest



- Dry cough
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- 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
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Severe pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Pain that does not go away, or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Blood in your stool
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Decreased or very dark urine
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**

## 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 (condoms) 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 and for 7 days after the last dose.
- **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.

Revised December 2025

