

## Ondansetron

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### About This Medicine

Ondansetron is a medicine used before chemotherapy to prevent nausea and vomiting (throwing up) during chemotherapy and/or radiation. It is given orally (by mouth), in the vein (IV), or in your muscle (intramuscularly).

### Possible Side Effects

- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Fever
- Tiredness
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Headache

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 2% or greater of patients treated with ondansetron. 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

- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some patients. 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.**
- Abnormal electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG)
- Risk of heart attack
- This medicine can increase serotonin level in your body which can cause serotonin syndrome. This condition can be harmful to your brain and nerve cells and can be life-threatening.
- This medicine can mask symptoms of a partial or complete blockage of your small and/or large intestine, especially if you have had recent surgery.

**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

- **For oral only:** Swallow the medicine as prescribed by your doctor.
- **Missed doses:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your doctor for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **For oral storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Protect from light.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** 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.
- 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). 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 doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea or constipation.
- 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 ondansetron 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 medicine interactions with ondansetron. 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.
- There are known interactions of ondansetron with medicines known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs; e.g. sertraline, escitalopram) and serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs; e.g., duloxetine, venlafaxine). Let your doctor know if you are taking these medicines as this can increase the risk of serotonin syndrome.
- There are known interactions of ondansetron with apomorphine. Let your doctor know if you are taking apomorphine as this could cause a severe decrease in blood pressure and fainting.

## 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
- Headache that does not go away
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling that your heart is beating fast or in a not normal way (palpitations)
- 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.**
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- 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.
- Unable to pass gas
- Signs of serotonin syndrome: irritability, confusion, feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way, muscle stiffness, twitching muscles, fever, chills, sweating, vomiting, diarrhea and/or seizure.
- 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.**
- If you think you may be pregnant

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** It is not known if this medicine may harm an unborn baby. For this reason, be sure to talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while receiving this medicine.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this medicine passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this medicine because this medicine may 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.

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