

## Pegaspargase (Oncaspar)

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### About This Medicine

Pegaspargase is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV) or as an injection in a muscle (IM).

### Possible Side Effects

- Neutropenic fever. A type of fever that can develop when you have a very low number of white blood cells which can be life-threatening.
- Infection and sepsis - a serious illness from an infection, which can be life-threatening
- 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.**
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Inflammation (swelling) of your pancreas
- Blood clots and events such as stroke and heart attack, which can be life-threatening. A blood clot in your leg may cause your leg to swell, appear red and warm, and/or cause pain. A blood clot in your lungs may cause trouble breathing, pain when breathing, and/or chest pain.
- Elevated blood clotting function that may raise your risk of bleeding
- Decrease in a blood protein called albumin
- Changes in your liver function
- Increase in your triglyceride levels

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 5% of patients treated with pegaspargase. 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

- Severe allergic reactions
- Serious blood clots
- Severe changes in your blood sugar levels
- Severe inflammation of your pancreas, which can be life-threatening

- Abnormal bleeding – symptoms may be coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds or any other unusual bleeding.

**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

- 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.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your nurse or your doctor if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of pegaspargase 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 pegaspargase. 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.
- This medicine interacts with hormonal birth control (i.e., birth control pills, skin patches, vaginal rings, injections) and affects how they work. Discuss with your doctor and/or nurse what method of birth control may be right for you during your treatment.

## 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
- Weakness that interferes with your daily activities



- Wheezing, trouble breathing, and/or fast breathing
- 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. 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.**
- Symptoms of a stroke such as sudden numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, feeling dizzy, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden bad headache with no known cause. **If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Severe pain in your abdomen that may spread to your back
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- 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 abnormal bleeding such as coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), easy bleeding or bruising, red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds, or any other unusual bleeding
- Signs of possible 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
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- 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.**
- Your leg is swollen, red, warm and/or painful
- If you think you may be pregnant

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on an unborn child. Women of child-bearing potential should use effective non-hormonal methods of birth control (i.e., condom, sponge, diaphragm, spermicide, and/or cervical cap) during your cancer treatment and for 3 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 1 month 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.

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