



Pentostatin: High-Dose for SCT

Other Names: Nipent®

About this drug

Pentostatin is used to treat cancer. This drug is given in the vein (IV).

Possible side effects (more common)

- Nausea and throwing up (vomiting). These symptoms may happen within a few hours after your treatment and may last up to 48-72 hours. Medicines are available to stop or lessen these side effects.
- Feeling drowsy or tired, trouble waking up
- Rash or dry skin
- Joint and muscle pain
- High risk for respiratory infections

Possible side effects (less common)

- Changes in your liver function. Your doctor will check your liver function as needed.
- If you are getting treatment for an infection before starting this medicine, that infection may get worse after starting pentostatin.
- Cough and trouble breathing

Treating side effects

- Drink 6-8 cups of fluids each day unless your doctor has told you to limit your fluid intake due to some other health problem. A cup is 8 ounces of fluid. If you throw up or have loose bowel movements you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack water in the body due to losing too much fluid).
- Ask your doctor or nurse about medicine that is available to help stop or lessen nausea.
- Vaginal lubricants can be used to lessen vaginal dryness, itching, and pain during sexual relations.

Food and drug interactions

There are known interactions of Pentostatin with food and with some other medicines like acetaminophen, aspirin, and ibuprofen. Ask your doctor what over-the-counter (OTC) medicines you can take for fever, headache and muscle and joint pain. Patients getting this drug with carmustine, etoposide and cyclophosphamide for bone marrow transplant may have trouble breathing because of fluid build-up in the lungs.

When to call the doctor

Call your doctor or nurse **right away** if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever of 100.5 F (38 C) or higher
- Chills
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Wheezing or trouble breathing
- Rash or itching
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Loose bowel movements (diarrhea) more than 4 times a day or diarrhea with weakness or feeling lightheaded
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Painful urination; blood in urine
- Pain in your lower back or side
- Feeling confused or agitated
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. Or the discomfort may go away and come back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes discomfort 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, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden, severe headache with no known cause. If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.
- Signs of liver problems: dark urine, pale stools, severe stomach pain, feeling very tired and weak, itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin,

Call your doctor or nurse **as soon as possible** if any of these symptoms happen:

- Change in hearing, ringing in the ears
- Decreased urine

- Unusual thirst or frequent urination
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Heavy menstrual period that lasts longer than normal
- Numbness, tingling, decreased feeling or weakness in fingers, toes, arms, or legs
- Trouble walking or changes in the way you walk, feeling clumsy when buttoning clothes, opening jars, or other routine hand activities
- Swelling of legs, ankles, or feet
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Persistent loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Fatigue that interferes with your daily activities
- Unusual thirst or frequent urination
- Headache that does not go away
- Painful, red, or swollen areas on your hands or feet.
- No bowel movement for 3 days or you feel uncomfortable
- Extreme weakness that interferes with normal activities

Reproduction concerns

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug may have harmful effects on the unborn child, so effective methods of birth control should be used during your cancer treatment.
- Genetic counseling is available for you to talk about the effects of this drug therapy on future pregnancies. Also, a genetic counselor can look at the possible risk of problems in the unborn baby due to this medicine if an exposure happens during pregnancy.
- **Breast feeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women are advised to discuss with their doctor the risks and benefits of breast feeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and seriously harm a breast feeding infant.

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