

Sargramostim (Leukine)

About This Drug

Sargramostim belongs to a class of medicines which helps the body make more white blood cells. White blood cells help fight infection in your body. This drug is given in the vein (IV) or as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously).

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Pain in your abdomen
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movement)
- Fever
- General discomfort, feeling of being unwell
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Decrease in a blood protein called albumin
- Changes in your liver function
- Changes in electrolytes
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- Headache
- Changes in your kidney/bladder function
- Infections
- Cough or trouble breathing
- Rash
- 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.
- High blood pressure

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 30% of patients treated with sargramostim. Your side effects may be different depending on your specific cancer diagnosis. Not all possible side effects are included above.

Warnings and Precautions

- Severe swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body. Fluid may build-up around your lungs and/or heart.
- A syndrome where fluid and protein can leak from your blood vessels into your tissues. This can cause a decrease in your blood protein level and blood pressure and fluid can accumulate in your tissues and/or lungs.
- Abnormal heartbeat and/or electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG)
- While you are getting this drug in your vein (IV), you may have a reaction to the drug. Sometimes you may be given medication to stop or lessen these side effects. Your nurse will check you closely for these signs: fever or shaking chills, flushing, facial swelling, feeling dizzy, headache, trouble breathing, rash, itching, chest tightness, or chest pain. These reactions may happen after your infusion. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this drug 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 drug. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- A rapid increase in your white blood cells may happen.

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- 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 nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- 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.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea. To help with weight loss, drink fluids that contribute calories (whole milk, juice, soft drinks, sweetened beverages, milkshakes, and nutritional supplements) instead of water.



- 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.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- 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 nurse and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.
- 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.
- Infusion reactions may occur after your infusion. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of sargramostim 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 sargramostim. 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
- Headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or other changes in eyesight
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Cough that is bothersome
- Chest pain, especially when you lean forward or take deep breaths
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- 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 in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Decreased or very dark urine
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Signs of infusion reaction: fever or shaking chills, flushing, facial swelling, feeling dizzy, headache, trouble breathing, rash, itching, chest tightness, or chest pain. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- 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.**
- 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
- A new rash and/or itching or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** It is not known if this drug may harm an unborn child. For this reason, be sure to talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while receiving this drug. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should not breastfeed during treatment and for at least 2 weeks after stopping treatment because this drug could 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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