

## Vinblastine

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### About This Drug

Vinblastine is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV)

### Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. 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.
- Changes to your heart function including chest pain, stroke, abnormal heart beats, and heart attack may rarely occur.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Jaw pain
- Bone and/or tumor pain
- Effects on the nerves are called peripheral neuropathy. You may feel numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet. It may be hard for you to button your clothes, open jars, or walk as usual. The effect on the nerves may get worse with more doses of the drug. These effects get better in some people after the drug is stopped but it does not get better in all people.
- Changes in your central nervous system can happen. The central nervous system is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You could feel extreme tiredness, changes in hearing, problems with balance or dizziness and seizures. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**
- 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:** 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 drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

### Warnings and Precautions



- Skin and tissue irritation including redness, pain, warmth, or swelling at the IV site if the drug leaks out of the vein and into nearby tissue. Very rarely, it may cause tissue necrosis (death).
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Severe bone marrow suppression. 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.
- Trouble breathing, or severe spasm of airway may occur following infusion of vinblastine; usually in combination with another drug called mitomycin.

**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

- This drug may be present in the saliva, tears, sweat, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions. Talk to your doctor and/or your nurse about the necessary precautions to take during this time.

## 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.
- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- If you are dizzy, get up slowly after sitting or lying.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- If you throw up, 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.
- Constipation can be difficult to treat once it starts during treatment with this drug. Talk to your doctor and/or nurse about ways to prevent constipation. Ask your doctor or nurse about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation.
- 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 are not able to move your bowels, check with your doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- If you have numbness and tingling in your hands and feet, be careful when cooking, walking, and handling sharp objects and hot liquids.
- 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.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- This drug may interact with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Talk to your doctor as this could make side effects worse.
- 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 vinblastine. 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
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Symptoms of a seizure such as confusion, blacking out, passing out, loss of hearing or vision, blurred vision, unusual smells or tastes (such as burning rubber), trouble talking, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, repeated body movements, tense muscles that do not relax, and loss of control of urine and bowels. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**
- Blurry vision or changes in your eyesight
- Decrease in hearing or loss of hearing
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or 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.**
- 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.**
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Pain that does not go away or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- While you are getting this drug, please tell your nurse right away if you have any pain, redness, or swelling at the site of the IV infusion
- Numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet
- If you think you may be pregnant

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment. 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 talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm banking.

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