



For the Patient: Bortezomib

Other names: VELCADE®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Bortezomib** (bor-TEZ-oh-mib) is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to bortezomib before taking bortezomib.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Your doctor may tell you to **drink** plenty of liquids e.g., 8-12 cups (2000-3000 mL or 70-100 oz) a day. This helps prevent dehydration.
- Other drugs may **interact** with bortezomib. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- **Green tea** and preparations made from green tea should be avoided throughout the entire time of treatment. These have been found to severely decrease the effectiveness of bortezomib, and might make it have no effect at all.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of bortezomib.
- Bortezomib may cause **sterility** in men and **menopause** in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with bortezomib.
- Bortezomib may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with bortezomib. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with bortezomib before you receive any treatment from them, **including blood transfusions**.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply cool compresses or soak in cool for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for 24 hours. Most people have little or no nausea.	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*
Diarrhea may occur.	<p>Diarrhea must be treated <i>immediately</i> with loperamide 2 mg tablets (e.g., IMODIUM®):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take ONE tablet at the first sign of loose or more frequent stools than usual. • Then take ONE tablet every TWO hours until diarrhea has stopped for 12 hours. • At night, you may take ONE tablet every FOUR hours (set your alarm) during the time you usually sleep. • Always keep a supply of loperamide (e.g., have 48 tablets on hand). You can buy loperamide at any pharmacy without a prescription. <p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drink plenty of liquids. ▪ Eat and drink often in small amounts. ▪ Avoid high fiber foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy</i>. ▪ A dietitian can give you more suggestions for dealing with diarrhea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If diarrhea does not improve 24 hours after starting loperamide or lasts more than 36 hours, call your doctor.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Constipation may occur.	To help constipation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids (8 cups a day). • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*
Fever may occur shortly after treatment with bortezomib. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • Fever which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be the sign of an infection.
Skin rashes and itching may occur.	To help itching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use calamine lotion. • If very irritating, call your doctor during office hours. • Otherwise make sure to mention it at your next visit.
Your white blood cells may decrease during or after your treatment. They usually return to normal after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.	To help prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your doctor immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your platelets may decrease 7-14 days after your first treatment. They usually return to normal after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.
<p>Minor bleeding, such as nosebleeds, may occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat. • Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. • After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes. • Stay quiet for a few hours and do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped. • Get emergency help if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.
<p>Headache, bone pain and/or muscle pain may occur.</p>	<p>Take acetaminophen (eg, TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</p>
<p>Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
You may have trouble sleeping .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor if your trouble in sleeping continues to bother you. • This will return to normal when you stop taking bortezomib.
Taste alteration may occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Cope with Taste and Smell Changes</i> .*
Loss of appetite and weight loss are common and may persist long after discontinuation of bortezomib.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
Numbness, tingling or pain may develop in your hands and feet. This may slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot or cold. • Tell your doctor at you next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, picking up small objects, or pain.
Emotional changes (e.g., feelings of anxiety) may sometimes occur.	Discuss these symptoms with your doctor if they occur.
Hair loss does not occur with bortezomib.	

*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- Signs of **severe fluid loss** due to diarrhea such as fainting, light-headedness or dizziness.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of ankles, or fainting.
- Signs of **low blood pressure** such as light-headedness, dizziness, or fainting.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Swelling** of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- **Numbness** or **tingling** in feet or hands.

