



For the Patient: Bexarotene capsules
Other names: TARGRETIN®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Bexarotene** (bexs air' oh teen) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a capsule that you take by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to vitamin A preparations, bexarotene, or other retinoids before taking bexarotene.
- **Blood tests** may be taken regularly during treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- If you are a woman and are able to have children, a blood test to determine whether you are **pregnant** will be taken before starting bexarotene treatment, and then repeated every month.
- Bexarotene may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. Severe birth defects or death to the unborn baby may occur. Bexarotene should **never** be used by females who are pregnant. **Two** forms of reliable **birth control** must be used at the same time during treatment and for at least one month after your last dose of bexarotene. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Men** who are taking bexarotene must use a **condom** every time they have sex with a female partner who is able to bear children because it is not known if the drug is present in semen. Tell your doctor right away if your partner becomes pregnant.
- It is important to **take** bexarotene exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- Take bexarotene **with food**.
- If you **miss a dose** of bexarotene, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Other drugs such as gemfibrozil (LOPID®) and vitamin A preparations may **interact** with bexarotene. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drug as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.

- **Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice** for the duration of your treatment, as these may interact with bexarotene.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of bexarotene.
- **Store** bexarotene capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with bexarotene before you receive any treatment from them.

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
Nausea does not usually occur with bexarotene.	
Dry skin or skin rashes may sometimes occur.	If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.
Normal 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.
Headache and abdominal pain may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Your doctor may do a blood test to make sure your thyroid gland is working properly. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight and tanning salons. • Wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Wear a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply liberally, 30 minutes before exposure. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming. • Consult the <i>BC Health Guide</i> or your community pharmacist for more information.
Cataracts may rarely occur.	See an eye doctor if your vision becomes cloudy or blurred.
Increase in cholesterol or triglyceride levels may commonly occur.	<p>Discuss this with your doctor if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of heart disease. • High blood pressure. • High cholesterol or triglycerides. <p>You may need to have your cholesterol level checked a few months after starting bexarotene.</p>
Hair loss is rare with bexarotene. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with bexarotene. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair loss due to chemotherapy</i> .*

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

STOP TAKING BEXAROTENE AND 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), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- Severe **abdominal pain** with or without nausea or vomiting.

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

- **Unprotected sex** or forget to use **birth control** during and for one month after treatment with bexarotene.
- **Changes in eyesight.**
- **For diabetics:** uncontrolled blood sugars.

