



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Nelarabine
Other names: ATRIANCE®

- **Nelarabine** (nel ar' a been) is a drug that is used to treat some 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 nelarabine before receiving nelarabine.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Other drugs such as pentostatin (NIPENT®) may **interact** with nelarabine. Tell your doctor if you are taking this or any other drugs 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.
- Do not receive any **immunizations** before discussing with your doctor.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of nelarabine.
- Nelarabine may affect your ability to **drive** a car or **operate machinery**. Use caution with any activity that requires mental alertness.
- Nelarabine may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with nelarabine. Ask your doctor how long you should continue using birth control after your treatment has ended. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Tell** your doctor, dentist, and other health professionals that you are being treated with nelarabine before you receive any treatment from them.

Changes in blood counts

Nelarabine may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by ordering regular blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
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 healthcare team immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). When the platelet count is low, you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.	To help prevent bleeding problems: <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. Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding. <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®).

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 water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Fever may sometimes occur.	Fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection. Report this to your healthcare team immediately .

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment. If you are vomiting and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated. Most people have little or no nausea.	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take before your 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 fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.* <p>Tell your healthcare team if nausea or vomiting continues or is not controlled with your antinausea drug(s).</p>
Diarrhea may sometimes occur. If you have diarrhea and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.* <p>Tell your healthcare team if you have diarrhea for more than 24 hours.</p>
Constipation may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*
Sugar control may be affected in patients with diabetes.	Check your blood sugar regularly if you have diabetes.
Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
Tiredness and lack of energy may commonly occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i>.*
Hair loss does not occur with nelarabine.	

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

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F 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 **bleeding problems** such as black or tarry stools, blood in urine, pinpoint red spots on skin, or extensive bruising.
- **Seizures or fainting.**
- 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 feet or lower legs, or fainting.
- Sudden loss of control over your **bowel movements** or **bladder**.
- **Trouble waking up** or you are finding it hard to **stay awake** during the day.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- **Numbness or tingling** in feet or hands; **trouble walking.**
- **Muscle pain or weakness.**
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Changes in eyesight.**
- **Headache.**
- Problems with your **memory, trouble thinking, feeling confused.**

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Easy bruising or minor bleeding, such as nosebleeds.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Loss of appetite or changes in taste.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Feelings of sadness that are not normal for you.
- For patients with diabetes: uncontrolled blood sugars.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM
