Porfimer (POR-fimm-er) is a drug that is used with laser light to treat many types of cancer. It is a reddish-brown liquid that is injected into a vein.

Tell your doctor if you or a member of your family has been diagnosed with porphyria or if you have ever had an unusual or allergic reaction to porphyrins or porfimer before receiving porfimer.

Other drugs may interact with porfimer. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.

Tell your doctor if you have received radiation therapy recently.

The drinking of alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of porfimer.

It is not known if porfimer may damage sperm or harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use birth control while being treated with porfimer. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.

Tell doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with porfimer 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIDE EFFECTS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porfimer burns if it leaks under the skin.</td>
<td>Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.</td>
<td>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea does not usually occur with porfimer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may sometimes have trouble sleeping.</td>
<td>Talk to your doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SIDE EFFECTS

**Sunburn** of exposed skin and eyes can occur in a matter of minutes. Porfimer makes your skin and eyes more sensitive to light for 4-12 weeks after treatment. Sunburn can occur from any bright light, indoors or outdoors, not just the sun.

Your skin may blister, swell and redden if exposed to light. Your may experience eye pain when looking at bright light.

Your eyes and the skin around your eyes may be more sensitive to light than the rest of your skin.

Regular, indoor light, at a level that is comfortable for reading, should not bother skin or eyes. Some indoor light is good for you because it will help clear porfimer from your body.

### MANAGEMENT

- When outdoors, wear dark sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, a high neckline, long sleeves, long pants or skirt, gloves, and socks outdoors. Hold clothes up to a bright light to make sure no light comes through. Bring these items with you on the day of treatment.
- Avoid sunlight, bright indoor and outdoor light, and tanning salons. You can burn outside even on cloudy days or when in a car.
- Avoid helmet type hair dryers like those found in beauty salons. Handheld hair dryers are a safe option.
- Stay indoors as much as you can, close curtains on windows, and stay away from windows.
- Limit outdoor activities to after sundown.
- If you do go outdoors during daylight hours, wear an opaque sunblock such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide on exposed skin when outdoors. Reapply every 2 hours or if it has rubbed off. Do not rely only on sunblock.
- Regular transparent sunscreens will not protect you from sunburn caused by porfimer.
- Carry an umbrella for shade.

If you sunburn:
- Apply cool compresses to affected area.
- Take ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) 650 mg every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 3900 mg per day for mild to moderate pain and to reduce burn damage.
- Call your doctor during office hours if you have a severe skin reaction such as blisters and pain.

Test your skin to see if it still burns easily 30 days after your treatment with porfimer.
- Expose a small area (e.g., cut a 2 inch circle...
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<td>- in a brown paper bag and place the back of your hand in the bag) to the sun for 10 minutes. Expose only the unprotected patch to the sun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not use your face for testing.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If your skin burns, reddens, itches, swells, or blisters within 24 hours, continue to avoid the sun for 2 more weeks, then repeat the test.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If you do not have a reaction within 24 hours you may gradually increase your exposure to light.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Some people are sensitive to light for 90 days or longer after receiving porfimer.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If you travel to an area with more sunshine you should retest for sun sensitivity.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Swelling and irritation** may occur at the cancer site after your laser light treatment.

- This is an expected reaction.
- If you have treatment to the esophagus you may experience chest or abdominal pain, trouble swallowing, hiccups, and shortness of breath.
- If you have treatment to the lungs you may experience cough, chest pain, and shortness of breath.
- If you have treatment to the bladder you may experience painful or frequent urination and blood in the urine.
- Take ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) 650 mg every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 3900 mg per day.
- Call your doctor if symptoms get worse.

**Fever** may sometimes occur shortly after treatment with porfimer. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.

- Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
- Fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a day after treatment may be the sign of an infection. Report this to your doctor immediately.
SIDE EFFECTS | MANAGEMENT
--- | ---
**Constipation** may sometimes occur. | • Exercise if you can.
• Drink plenty of fluids.
• Try ideas in *Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation.*

**Diarrhea** may sometimes occur if you have treatment to the esophagus. | If diarrhea is a problem:
• Drink plenty of fluids.
• Eat and drink often in small amounts.
• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in *Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy.*

**Hair loss** does not occur with porfimer.

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

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:**
• Shortness of breath, difficulty in **breathing**, or **chest pain**.
• **Trouble swallowing**.
• **Coughing up blood**.
  • 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) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
  • Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:**
• **Severe or worsening irritation** at the treatment site.
• **Severe skin reaction** such as blisters, swelling, and pain.
• Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
• Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
• For bladder cancer: signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning sensation, presence of blood, or abdominal pain.

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:**
• Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, constipation, or diarrhea.
• Pain not controlled with acetaminophen (TYLENOL®).
• Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
• Skin rash or itching.
• Trouble sleeping.
• Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs.
• For Barrett’s esophagus: redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR