



**For the Patient: Raltitrexed**  
Other names: TOMUDEX®

## BC Cancer Agency

- **Raltitrexed** (ral-ti-TREX-ed) is a drug that is used to treat cancer of the colon and rectum. It may also be used to treat other kinds of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- 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.
- Other drugs such as folic acid, leucovorin (folinic acid) or vitamin preparations containing folic acid or leucovorin may **interact** with raltitrexed. Do not take these products the day before or on the day of your raltitrexed treatment. Tell your doctor if you are taking these 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 taking any new drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of raltitrexed.
- Raltitrexed may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with raltitrexed, and for 6 months following the last treatment. 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 raltitrexed 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
<p>A <b>flu-like illness</b> may occur shortly after your treatment. You may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (eg, TYLENOL®) every 3-4 hours if needed.</li> <li>• Fever and chills that occur more than 48 hours after treatment may be signs of an infection. They should be reported to the doctor immediately. See details below.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur 2-3 days after your treatment. Some people have little or no nausea.</p>	<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"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Control Nausea</i>.</li> </ul>
<p>Mild to moderate <b>diarrhea</b> may occur.</p>	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Coping with Diarrhea</i></li> </ul>
<p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> will decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, <b>you are at greater risk of having an infection.</b></p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Take care of your skin and mouth.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Call your doctor <b>immediately</b> 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Your bank of energy savings: How people with cancer can handle fatigue</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hair loss is rare</b> with raltitrexed. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with raltitrexed. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush.</li> <li>• Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</li> </ul>

