



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: Vinblastine

Other names:

- **Vinblastine** (vin blas' teen) is a drug that is used to treat many types 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 erythromycin, phenytoin (DILANTIN®), ketoconazole, itraconazole (SPORANOX®), and voriconazole (VFEND®) may **interact** with vinblastine. 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 or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of vinblastine.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with vinblastine 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
Vinblastine <b>burns</b> if it leaks under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor <b>immediately</b> if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.
<b>Skin rashes</b> may rarely occur.	If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise make sure to mention it at your next visit.
Your <b>skin may sunburn</b> more easily than usual.	Refer to <i>Your Medication Sun Sensitivity and Sunscreens*</i> or the <i>BC Health Guide</i> for more information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After sun exposure, if you have a severe sunburn or skin reaction such as itching, rash, or swelling, contact your doctor.</li> </ul>
<b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
<b>Nausea</b> does not usually occur with vinblastine.	

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Your <b>white blood cells</b> may decrease 4-10 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 1-3 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>	To help prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</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>
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may rarely occur.	<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 <a href="#">Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</a> OR <a href="#">Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</a>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Headache, jaw pain and/or muscle pain</b> may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
<b>Constipation</b> commonly occurs and may be severe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use stool softeners and laxatives to prevent constipation.</li> <li>• Avoid <b>bulk-forming laxatives</b> (e.g., METAMUCIL®, PRODIEM®).</li> <li>• Try ideas in <a href="#">Food Choices to Manage Constipation</a>.*</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> </ul>
<b>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes</b> may sometimes occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot or cold.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> sometimes occurs with vinblastine. Hair loss is usually mild. Loss of body hair may occur. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with vinblastine. Colour and texture may change.	<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>

**\*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), 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, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.

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

- **Constipation** that is not relieved by stool softeners and laxatives.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or chest pain.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Dizziness** or **hearing problems**.
- **Changes in eye sight** or **drooping eyelids**.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning sensation, presence of blood, or abdominal pain.
- Increased **sore throat** or **mouth** that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:**

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, or diarrhea.
- Pain or headache not controlled with acetaminophen (TYLENOL®).
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Skin rash or itching.

**REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR**

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