



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Vincristine
Other names: ONCOVIN®, VCR

- **Vincristine** (vin-KRIS-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.
- There are many drugs that may **interact** with vincristine. Some antifungal drugs (e.g., fluconazole), certain antibiotics (e.g., erythromycin as well as ciprofloxacin), carbamazepine, cyclosporine, digoxin, isoniazid, nifedipine, phenytoin, and verapamil can all interact with vincristine. Tell your doctor if you are taking this/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 vincristine.
- Vincristine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with vincristine. 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 vincristine 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
Vincristine burns if it leaks under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.
Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Nausea does not usually occur with vincristine.	

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Constipation often occurs and may be severe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use stool softeners and laxatives to prevent constipation. • Avoid bulk-forming laxatives (e.g., METAMUCIL®, PRODIEM®). • Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.* • Drink plenty of fluids. • Exercise if you can.
Headache, jaw pain and/or muscle pain may occur	For minor pain, take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes may occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot, or cold. • Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.
Hair loss or hair thinning sometimes occurs with vincristine. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with vincristine. Colour and texture may change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes, and perms.

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

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- **Seizures or loss of consciousness.**

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

- Signs of **bladder problems** such as decrease or increase in urination or painful or difficult urination.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Changes in eyesight.**
- Ringing in your ears or **hearing problems.**
- **Trouble** in walking.

