



## For the Patient: Irinotecan injection solution for oral use

Other names: CAMPTOSAR®

- **Irinotecan** (eye-REEN-oh-TEE-can) is a drug that is used to treat some kinds of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is taken by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to irinotecan before taking irinotecan.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your test results and/or other side effects.
- It is important to **take** irinotecan exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- **Take** irinotecan on an empty stomach.
- **Dilute** each dose of irinotecan in a small glass of cranberry or grape juice immediately before you take it. This helps to cover the unpleasant taste. Be sure to finish the entire dose.
- If you **vomit** the dose of irinotecan within 1 hour of taking it, do not take a second dose. Call your healthcare team during office hours for advice. You will be told whether you need to take another dose.
- Other drugs such as laxatives, seizure medicines, St. John's Wort, dexamethasone (DECADRON®), lopinavir-ritonavir (KALETRA®), and prochlorperazine (STEMETIL®) may **interact** with irinotecan.
  - Dexamethasone can be taken as an anti-nausea drug. Discuss with your cancer doctor if you are taking dexamethasone on a daily basis.
  - Prochlorperazine should not be taken as an anti-nausea drug on the day of your irinotecan treatment.
  - Tell your doctor if you are taking any other drugs as your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- **Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice** for the duration of your treatment, as these may interact with irinotecan.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of irinotecan.

- Irinotecan may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with irinotecan. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Store** irinotecan syringes out of the reach of children, in the refrigerator.
- **Tell** your doctor, dentist, and other health professionals that you are being treated with irinotecan 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <b>Early diarrhea</b> may occur during or shortly after an irinotecan treatment (within 24 hours). It starts with watery eyes, stomach cramps and sweating. If you have diarrhea and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your healthcare team <b>immediately</b> if you have watery eyes, stomach cramps, or sweating during or after your treatment.</li> <li>• Early diarrhea is treated with a medication called atropine, which is injected into a vein or under your skin. Your healthcare team may tell you to go to your cancer centre or Hospital Emergency for atropine treatment.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Late diarrhea</b> may occur several days after an irinotecan treatment. It starts with stools more loose or more often than usual. If you have diarrhea and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.                       | <p><b>Late diarrhea must be treated <i>immediately</i> with loperamide 2 mg tablets</b> (e.g., IMODIUM®):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take <b>TWO tablets</b> at the first sign of loose or more frequent stools than usual.</li> <li>• Then take <b>ONE tablet</b> every <b>TWO hours</b> until diarrhea has stopped for 12 hours.</li> <li>• At night, you may take <b>TWO tablets</b> every <b>FOUR hours</b> (set your alarm) during the time you usually sleep.</li> <li>• <b>This dose is much higher than the package directions. It is very important that you take this higher dose to stop the diarrhea.</b></li> <li>• Always keep a supply of loperamide (e.g., have 48 tablets on hand). You can buy loperamide at any pharmacy without a prescription.</li> </ul> |

| SIDE EFFECTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | MANAGEMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <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 fiber foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.*</li> <li>• A dietitian can give you more suggestions for dealing with diarrhea.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tell your healthcare team if diarrhea does not improve 24 hours after starting loperamide or lasts more than 36 hours.</b></p>                                                                          |
| <p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur after your treatment and may last for 24 hours. If you are vomiting and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.</p>                                                                                                                                 | <p>You will be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. <b>It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred</b>, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in the <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.*</li> </ul> <p>Tell your healthcare team if nausea or vomiting continues or is not controlled with your antinausea drug(s).</p> |
| <p><b>Constipation</b> may occur.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> will decrease 1 week after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks after your 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>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Stop taking irinotecan and call your healthcare team <b>immediately</b> 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.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Swelling</b> of hands, feet or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate your feet when sitting.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| SIDE EFFECTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | MANAGEMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may 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 <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i>.*</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Sore mouth</b> may occur a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b>                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste.</li> <li>Make a mouthwash with ¼ teaspoon baking soda AND ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.</li> <li>Try ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth</i>.*</li> </ul> |
| <b>Hair loss is common</b> and may begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. Your hair may thin or you may become totally bald. Your scalp may feel tender. You may lose hair on your face and body. Your hair will grow back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments. Colour and texture may change. | <p>Refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i>.*</p> <p>You may also want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.</li> <li>If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses.</li> </ul>                                                                     |
| <b>Headaches</b> may occur. These are usually mild.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Take acetaminophen (e.g., <b>TYLENOL®</b> ) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| You may have <b>trouble sleeping</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell your healthcare team if you continue to have trouble sleeping.</li> <li>This will return to normal when you stop treatment with irinotecan.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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

### **STOP TAKING IRINOTECAN AND CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:**

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer); chills; cough; pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Diarrhea** that occurs within the first 24 hours after irinotecan treatment.
- Signs of **severe fluid loss** due to diarrhea such as fainting, light-headedness or dizziness.

- Severe **diarrhea** that occurs after the first 24 hours AND does not improve 24 hours after starting loperamide OR lasts more than 36 hours.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **lung problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea and/or vomiting.
- Easy bruising or bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Skin rash.

**REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM**

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.