Bleomycin

- **Bleomycin** (blee-oh-MICE-in) is a drug that is used to treat many forms of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is usually injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to bleomycin before receiving bleomycin.
- 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.
- Some drugs, herbal products and supplements may **interact** with your treatment. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these or before you start taking any new drugs.
- **Oxygen** may increase the risk of lung problems during and after treatment with bleomycin. Lung problems can occur months or years after treatment. **Tell** your doctors or dentists that you have been treated with bleomycin before you receive any type of surgery. You should carry a **wallet card** or wear a **wrist bracelet** to alert health providers. Avoid activities which use increased oxygen pressure, such as scuba diving, for the rest of your life.
- Bleomycin may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with bleomycin. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists or other healthcare providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Allergic reactions may **rarely** occur. Signs of an allergic reaction are dizziness, confusion and wheezing. This can occur immediately or several hours after receiving bleomycin and usually only with the first or second dose.	Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving bleomycin or visit the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) urgent care unit **immediately** if this happens after you leave the day-care unit.
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment.	You will 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. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Skin rashes may occur.	To help itching: • You can use calamine lotion. • If very irritating, call your doctor during office hours. • Otherwise make sure to mention it at you next visit.
Fever and **chills** may occur shortly after treatment with bleomycin. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®) • Fever which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be the sign of an infection. • Visit the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) urgent care unit immediately 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.
Loss of appetite and **weight loss** are common and may persist long after discontinuation of bleomycin.	
Sore mouth may occur a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat. **Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.**	• 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. • Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day. • Try soft, bland foods like puddings, milkshakes and cream soups. • Avoid spicy, crunchy or acidic food, and very hot or cold foods.
Hair loss or hair thinning sometimes occurs with bleomycin. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with bleomycin. Color and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.
Your **skin may darken** in some areas such as your hands, elbows and knees.	This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment with bleomycin.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - CANADA (Developed: September 1994, Limited revision: 1 December 2004)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

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); chills; cough; pain or burning when you pass urine.

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

- Signs of **lung problems** such as shortness of breath, wheezing or coughing.
- Severe **skin reaction.**
- Signs of **heart problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Skin rash or itching.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR

This is a summary of useful information to help you understand and take your medicine safely .

We are available to answer your questions For urgent inquiries contact :

- **Urgent care unit at the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) TEL : 44397179 (available 24 hours, all week days).**

For further information or question contact :

- **Your doctor** (from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Clinical Pharmacy section,** TEL: 44397239 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Outpatient Pharmacy**, TEL: 44397531, 44397825 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .

Pharmacy Department

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