Etoposide

- Etoposide (ee-TOP-aw-side) is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancers. It is a pink capsule that you take by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to etoposide before taking etoposide.
- Take etoposide at the same time each day exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. Etoposide is preferably taken on an empty stomach with a glass of water; it may be taken with food if needed.
- **Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice** starting 3 days before and 1 day after your etoposide dose, as these may interact with the medication.
- If you **vomit** within 1 hour of taking etoposide, check with your doctor. You will be told whether to take the dose again or to wait until the next scheduled dose.
- For once a day dosing: If you **miss a dose** of etoposide, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Store etoposide capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- 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.
- Etoposide may cause **sterility** in men and **menopause** in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with etoposide.
- Etoposide may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with etoposide. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- Tell doctors or dentists or other health care 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
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment. Many people have little or no nausea.	You may be given a prescription for anti-nausea 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.
Loss of appetite and **weight loss** may occur.	• Moisturizing creams can help reduce skin dryness. • If skin reactions persist or get worse, call your doctor.
Taste alteration may occur.	• Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing. • Call your doctor **immediately** if you experience sudden weight gain, cough, chest pain, or increasing shortness of breath.
Diarrhea may occur.	If diarrhea is a problem: • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fiber foods
Constipation occurs rarely.	• Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids.
Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.	Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.
Your **white blood cells** will decrease 7-14 days 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, you are at greater risk of having an infection.**	To help prevent infection: • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Visit the National Center for 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.
Your **platelets** may decrease 9-16 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. **You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.**	To help prevent bleeding problems: • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. Some medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen or other pain medications may increase your risk of bleeding. • For minor pain, try paracetamol (Panadol®) • Refer to your doctor if any of these medications has been prescribed to you.
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 is common 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. Color and texture may change.	You may want to: • Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching. • If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad rimmed hat and glasses. • Protect your scalp with a hat, scarf or wig in cold weather. • Cover your head or apply sunblock on sunny days.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - CANADA(Developed: December. 2007)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

STOP TAKING ETOPOSIDE AND 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; sore throat; pain or burning when you pass urine; redness, pain or swelling of any area of your body; sores forming anywhere on your body.
- Signs of **bleeding** such as black, tarry stool; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.

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

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Numbness or tingling** in feet or hands.

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

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

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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