

Bleomycin

Description

Bleomycin (also called Blenoxane[®]) is an anticancer medicine. It is a clear liquid given by vein (IV).

Bleomycin can pose a health hazard to caregivers. All caregivers should take safety precautions while giving this drug. For 48 hours after this drug is given, the patient's body fluids can contain the drug. During that 48-hour period, caregivers should follow safety guidelines when handling the patient's vomit, blood, urine, and bowel movements, including diapers. These guidelines include wearing gloves when cleaning up body fluids. For a complete list of safety precautions, see "Do you know... Protecting caregivers from drug hazards."

Possible side effects

Early

- Mild nausea and vomiting
- Fever and chills
- Allergic reaction: symptoms include itching, red skin, severe fever and chills, short of breath, wheezing, or low blood pressure

Later (usually more than a day after treatment starts)

- Lung damage
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Skin rash
- Skin tender and peeling
- Change in the color of skin and nails
- Hair loss

These are the most common side effects, but there may be others. Please report all side effects to the doctor or nurse.

In case of a severe side effect or reaction, call the doctor, nurse or pharmacist at 595-3300. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), and press 0 once the call is connected.

This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.

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Special instructions

- A test dose (a small part of the full dose) may be given to check for a possible allergic reaction to bleomycin. The nurse will observe you during the test dose and will give you the rest of the dose if no reaction occurs.
- While you are receiving bleomycin and for a few months after treatment, you will need to have a number of lung function tests.

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