

## Medication Information Sheet

**carmustine** (KAR-MUS-teen)

*This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.*

**Other Name:** BiCNU®

**Appearance:** Clear, colourless to light yellow solution mixed into larger volume of fluids

**What is this medication for?**

For treating brain tumours, myeloma, certain lymphomas and melanoma.

**What should I do before I have this medication?**

- Tell your doctor if you have/had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have / had lung problems or lung disease, smoke, take any drugs that affect the lungs, or have any allergies.
- Carmustine may harm the unborn baby.
- Let your doctor know if you are breastfeeding, pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- People who have cancer are at a higher risk of developing other cancers. Also, some cancer medications, such as carmustine, may increase this risk. You should discuss this with your doctor.

**How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?**

- Do not use this drug if you are pregnant. If there is ANY chance that you or your partner may become pregnant, you and your partner together must: ► **Use 2 effective forms of birth control at the same time** while taking this drug: Keep using birth control until **6 months** after the last dose (general recommendation). Discuss with your healthcare team.
- Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant.
- Do not breastfeed while taking this drug.
- Effects on Fertility: Probable

**How is this medication given?**

- This drug is given by injection into a vein.

## What else do I need to know while on this medication?

- This medication can interact with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements). Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

The following side effects are common or severe. You may not have all of the side effects. Other side effects may occur. If you have any unusual or bothersome symptoms, discuss with your doctor.

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
<b>More Common Side Effects</b>	
<b>Liver problems</b> (yellow skin or eyes, dark urine)	Get emergency medical help right away
<b>Facial flushing</b>	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p><b>Unusual bleeding or bruising</b></p> <p>You may have black stools, cough up blood, blood in your urine, purple or red dots on your skin or bleeding that will not stop.</p> <p><b>Fever, chills, infection</b></p> <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time OR</b></li> <li>• <b>38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour.</b></li> </ul> <p>While you are getting chemotherapy treatments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a digital thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills).</li> </ul>	Get emergency medical help right away

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
<b>More Common Side Effects</b>	
<p>Avoid taking medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen) as they may hide a fever.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature.</li> <li>• Wash your hands often.</li> <li>• Check with your doctor before getting any vaccines, surgeries or visiting your dentist.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have a fever, talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room.</b> See our <a href="#">Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count)</a> pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p><b><i>Nausea and vomiting</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May occur in hours to days after the dose is given/ after treatment starts.</li> <li>• Drink clear fluids and avoid large meals. Get fresh air and rest.</li> <li>• Limit spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell.</li> <li>• Take anti-nausea drug(s) exactly as directed by your doctor. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it.</li> <li>• Contact your doctor if nausea lasts more than 1 day or if any vomiting occurs.</li> <li>• Also see Nausea &amp; Vomiting pamphlet.*</li> </ul>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p><b><i>Lung problems</i></b> (increased cough, breathing problems, chest pain)</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
<b>Less Common Side Effects, but may be Severe</b>	
<p><b><i>Heart problems</i></b> (irregular heartbeat, chest pain, fainting, swelling, shortness of breath)</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>
<p><b><i>Allergic reaction</i></b> (fever, severe rash, itchiness, swollen face, lip or tongue, chest or throat tightness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May occur during or shortly after the drug is given.</li> </ul>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

\*The most updated version and more symptom control information can be found on: <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/druginfo>  
Prepared with input from the Cancer Care Ontario-Medication Information Sheets Working Group.  
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Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
<b>Less Common Side Effects, but may be Severe</b>	
<p><b><i>Pain, burning, redness, or swelling on skin where drug was injected</i></b> (rare but may be severe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let your healthcare team know right away when this happens since this drug can harm or irritate tissues if it leaks from the vein during injection</li> </ul>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>
<p><b><i>Kidney problems</i></b> (lower back pain, body swelling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also look for passing little or no urine, darkening or blood in urine, or recent unusual weight gain</li> </ul>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>
<p><b><i>Blood clot</i></b> (limb pain or swelling, hardened vein in limb)</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to [www.cancercare.on.ca/symptoms](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/symptoms).

*The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.*

*A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may not follow the information provided in the Formulary.*