

Medication Information Sheet

EPIrubicin (e-pee-ROO-bi-sin)

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: Pharmorubicin PFS®

Appearance: Red solution ; may be mixed into larger bags of fluids

What is this medication for?

For treating breast, lung, stomach, ovarian and other cancers, as well as blood cancers such as lymphomas.

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your health care team if you have or had significant medical condition(s), such as:
 - ◊ heart, liver or kidney problems
 - ◊ received prior chemotherapy and/or radiation, or
 - ◊ any allergies.

Remember to:

- Tell your health care team about all of the other medications you are taking.
- Keep taking other medications that have been prescribed for you, unless you have been told not to by your health care team.

How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

- The use of this medication in men or women may cause harm to the unborn baby if pregnancy occurs. Let your health care team know if you or your partner is pregnant, becomes pregnant during treatment, or if you are breastfeeding
- 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. Do not take birth control pills if you have breast cancer. 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.
- This medication may affect fertility (ability to get pregnant).

How is this medication given?

- This drug is given by injection into a vein.
- Talk to your health care team about your treatment schedule.
- If you missed your treatment appointment, talk to your health care team to find out what to do.

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.
- **For mild aches and pain or fever:**
 - If you feel unwell, take your temperature before taking any medications for pain or fever. They may hide a fever.
 - You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets. Ask your health care team about the right dose for you.
 - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA), including low dose aspirin for heart conditions, may increase your chance of bleeding. Talk to your health care team before you start or stop these medications.
 - **Talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room right away if you have a fever.** See the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.
- It is normal for your urine (pee) to be red for up to 2 days after your epirubicin treatment. Tell your health care team if your pee stays red for more than 2 days.
- Drinking alcohol and smoking during your treatment may increase some side effects and make

your medication less effective. Speak to your health care team about smoking and drinking alcohol while on treatment.

What are the side effects of this medication?

The following table lists side effects that you may have when getting epirubicin. The table is set up to list the most common side effects first and the least common last. It is unlikely that you will have all of the side effects listed and you may have some that are not listed.

Read over the side effect table so that you know what to look for and when to get help. Keep this paper during your treatment so that you can refer to it if you need to.

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
<p>Hair thinning or loss</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your hair may begin to become thin or fall out during or after treatment. In most cases, your hair will grow back after treatment, but the texture or colour may change. In very rare cases, hair loss may be permanent. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a gentle soft brush and avoid hair sprays, bleaches, dyes and perms. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if this bothers you</p>
<p>Nausea and vomiting</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea is feeling like you need to throw up, you may also feel light-headed. May feel nausea within hours to days after your treatment. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent nausea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it happens. Take your preventative anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed, even if you do not feel like throwing up. Drink clear liquids and have small meals. Get fresh air and rest. Do not eat spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. 	<p>Talk to your healthcare team if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or severe</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit caffeine (like coffee, tea) and avoid alcohol. <p>If you have nausea or vomiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your rescue (as-needed) anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed. • Ask your health care team for the Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet for more information. • Talk to your health care team if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or if severe. 	
<p>Low platelets in the blood</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When platelets are low you are at risk for bleeding and bruising. Ask your health care team for the Low Platelet Count pamphlet for more information. <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for signs of bleeding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ bleeding from your gums ◦ unusual or heavy nosebleeds ◦ bruising easily or more than normal ◦ black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools ◦ red or brown coloured mucus when you cough ◦ dizziness, constant headache or changes in your vision ◦ heavy vaginal bleeding ◦ red or pink coloured urine (pee), except for the 2 days after your EPIrubicin treatment <p>What to do?</p> <p>If you have low platelets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your pharmacist that your platelet count may be low before taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medication. • Check with your healthcare team before you go to the dentist. • Try to prevent cuts and bruises. • Ask your health care team what activities are safe for you. • Low platelets may delay your treatment. Your health care team may recommend blood transfusion. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if you have any signs of bleeding. If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe (very heavy), you MUST get emergency help right away.</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
<p>If you have signs of bleeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a small bleed, clean the area with soap and water or a saline (saltwater) rinse. Apply pressure for at least 10 minutes. • If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe, you must get emergency medical help right away. 	
<p>Hot flashes, feeling or wave of warmth</p> <p>You may sweat more or have trouble sleeping because of this.</p> <p>To help prevent hot flashes :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid triggers such as spicy food, alcohol and caffeine (tea, coffee, and soft drinks), • Exercise regularly. Ask your health care team what exercises are appropriate for you before you start any new exercise. • Quitting smoking may also help. <p>If you have hot flashes :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep cool; dress lightly or in layers that you can easily remove and drink plenty of liquids unless you have been told otherwise. <p>Hot flashes may improve over time. Talk to your health care team if this is bothersome for you.</p> <p>Other symptoms of having low testosterone levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased sexual function or desire to have sex • Breast swelling or tenderness • Low energy • Mood changes, depression • Thinning of the bones and higher risk of fracture • High cholesterol and effects on your heart <p>Other symptoms of having low estrogen levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaginal dryness (possibly with discharge or bleeding) • Memory loss • Mood changes, depression • Thinning of the bones and increased risk of fracture <p>Contact your health care team if these feelings bother you.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
<p>Mouth sores</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round, painful, white or gray sores inside your mouth that can occur on the tongue, lips, gums, or inside your cheeks. • In more severe cases they may make it hard to swallow, eat or brush your teeth. • They may last for 3 days or longer. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent mouth sores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of your mouth by gently brushing and flossing regularly. • Rinse your mouth often with a homemade mouthwash. • To make a homemade mouthwash, mix 1 teaspoonful of baking soda and 1 teaspoonful of salt in 4 cups (1L) of water. • Do not use store-bought mouthwashes, especially those with alcohol, because they may irritate your mouth. <p>If you have mouth sores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy foods. • Your doctor may prescribe a special mouthwash to relieve mouth sores and prevent infection. • Talk to your health care team as soon as you notice mouth or lip sores or if it hurts to eat, drink or swallow. <p>Ask your health care team for the Oral Care (Mouth Care) pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team as soon as you notice mouth or lip sores or if it hurts to eat, drink or swallow</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
<p>Fatigue</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of tiredness or low energy that lasts a long time and does not go away with rest or sleep. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active. Aim to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise (you are able to talk comfortably while exercising) on most days. • Check with your health care team before starting any new exercise. • Pace yourself, do not rush. Put off less important activities. Rest when you need to. • Ask family or friends to help you with things like housework, shopping, and child or pet care. • Eat well and drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other liquids every day (unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less). • Avoid driving or using machinery if you are feeling tired. <p>Ask your health care team for the Fatigue pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>
<p>Diarrhea</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose, watery, unformed stool (poo) that may happen days to weeks after you get your treatment. <p>What to do?</p> <p>If you have diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-diarrhea medication if your health care team prescribed it or told you to take it. • Do not eat foods or drinks with artificial sweetener (like chewing gum or 'diet' drinks), coffee and alcohol. • Eat many small meals and snacks instead of 2 or 3 large meals. • Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day, unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less. • Talk to your health care team if you can't drink 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day when you have diarrhea. You may need to drink special liquids with salt and sugar, called Oral Rehydration Therapy. 	<p>Talk to you health care team if no improvement after 24 hours of taking diarrhea medication or if severe (more than 7 times in one day)</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your health care team if your diarrhea does not improve after 24 hours of taking diarrhea medication or if you have diarrhea more than 7 times in one day. <p>Ask your health care team for the Diarrhea pamphlet for more information.</p>	

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
<p>Reactions at the injection site</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your skin may become red, itchy, bruised, and/or swollen where the injection was given. Site reactions are usually mild and go away within one to three days. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell your nurse right away if there is any burning, stinging or other pain while epirubicin is being injected into your vein. You may need to apply hot compresses or ice/cold compresses if you have mild redness or discomfort. This depends on which medication caused the reaction in your treatment. Talk to your health care team to find out which treatment is right for you. 	Talk to your health care team as soon as possible
<p>Eye problems</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your eyes may feel dry, irritated, or painful. They may look red and have a lot of tears. They may feel sensitive to light and your vision may be blurry. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid wearing contact lenses. Wear sunglasses with UV protection. Use protective eyewear (goggles or helmet with face mask) when 	Talk to your health care team as soon as possible

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
playing sports, mowing the lawn or doing anything that may get particles or fumes in your eyes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may try artificial tears (eye drops) or ointment. 	

Other rare, but serious side effects are possible.

If you experience ANY of the following, speak to your cancer health care provider or get emergency medical help right away:

- Second or new cancers (your doctor will discuss and monitor this with you)
- Sudden loss of vision, speech, or the use of your arm(s) and/or leg(s)
- Pain or swelling or hardening of a vein in your arm(s) or leg(s)
- Increased cough, breathing problems, or coughing blood
- Chest pain or shortness of breath, swelling in your legs, ankle or belly
- Redness/rash in areas where you've previously received radiation
- Stomach pain, vomit blood or what looks like coffee-grounds or pass poo with bright red blood. Your poo could also look black/tarry coloured.
- Severe rash, itchiness, flushing, dizziness, chest or throat tightness (during or shortly after epirubicin is given)
- Lower back pain, pee less than usual
- Severe muscle spasms, cramping, weakness, or twitching, seizures, confusion

Who do I contact if I have questions or need help?

My cancer health care provider is: _____

During the day I should contact: _____

Evenings, weekends and holidays: _____

